# THE SULTĀNATE PERIOD
# COINS OF BENGAL

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# COINS OF BENGAL

**Focus on the Epigraphic Study, Calligraphy and History**

**Md. Shariful Islam**
**&**
**Mohammad Abdur Rahim**
With the assistance of Md. Mosharrof Hossain

black N range
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**This book is dedicated to Stan Goron for his significant contribution to oriental numismatics including the coinage of the Bengal Sultānate**

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# Contributors

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**Mohammad Abdur Rahim** is a prominent calligraphist and is the secretary at Bangladesh Calligraphy Society. He has a number of books and articles published in the area of calligraphy. He is now undertaking his PhD degree titled 'Trend of Arabic, Persian and Bangla Calligraphy Art in Sultanate, Bengal (1352-1539 AD)' from the Department of Oriental Art, Faculty of Fine Art, Dhaka University. He is life member of the Bangladesh Numismatic Collectors Society and Bangladesh Itihas Parisad.

**Md. Mosharrof Hossain** is a staff reporter at the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), the national news agency of Bangladesh. He was co-author of the book *Understanding the Coins of Bengal: Ancient to Early Modern Period* that was published by Manohar, New Delhi. He has a number of numismatic papers published in the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society. He is a life member of the Bangladesh Numismatic Collectors Society.

# Preface

Coins issued from Bengal during independent sultānate as well as Delhi interludes have been considered and studied in this volume. The focus of the volume is on conducting epigraphic study of the sultānate period coins of Bengal, analyzing the calligraphic styles used on these coins and documenting a few new numismatic findings of the period. A few known chronicles and a few new additions to the history of Bengal have been presented alongwith specific coins or sultāns. In both cases evident emphasis has been given on understanding how coins have played important role as references in constructing the history of Bengal. For epigraphic analysis, as first step, the images of the coins have been converted into gray-scale drawings and in a few cases into color drawings. Then the drawings have been segregated and decrypted with a view to make the illustrations decipherable to readers. One important additional focus of the volume, the calligraphic style of the inscriptions on the coins of Bengal Sultānate, may be noteworthy. The authors strongly believe that this endeavor should have added value in the area of numismatics of Bengal Sultānate. The authors of the volume have critically followed previous works and any deviations of opinions have been noted clearly.

Coins have been considered as an important source to know the history of any civilization.[1] Muhammad Mohar Ali considers 'coins and inscriptions of the Bengal Muslim rulers'[2] as one of the main sources of history of the pre-Mughal period of Islamic Bengal. Because of lack of complete chronicles written about sultāns and their rules in Bengal from inside of Bengal, stone inscriptions together with the coins is regarded as the 'most solid' sources of information on the history of Bengal of the sultānate period.[3] Here is the importance of epigraphic study of coins. Scholars and researchers in this area have contributed enormously and still investing energy and money in adding information in the history of Bengal by studying coins of that period.

Sultānate period coins of Bengal have been discovered and preserved in museums and in personal collections. Among them coins in personal collections are not negligible. Instead collections of coins as a hobby are increasingly growing among new generations of collectors. As a result, a large number of coins of this period are going in personal collections. Over years many discoveries have been brought out to public by the researchers by studying coins from those personal collections. But unfortunately as the inscriptions of coins of this period is mostly in Arabic scripture with varying calligraphic styles, being Bengali or Bangla as the language of people of Bengal who mostly have interest in these coins or in other cases most of the international collectors are not from Arabic language origin, a large number of the

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[1] M.S. Islam and M.M. Hossain, *Understanding the Coins of Bengal: Ancient to Early Modern Period,* Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2019, p. 15.

[2] M.M. Ali, *History of the Muslims of Bengal,* Imam Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud Islamic University, Riyadh, 1985, p. 9.

[3] Ibid., p. 14; M.S. Islam and M.M. Hossain, op.cit., p. 82.

collectors themselves don't fully understand what is written in their coins. They depend mostly on a few experts and researchers for knowing what they are collecting and in many cases those coins are not placed to them for study and thus it is not unlikely that many important data of history of Bengal of this period or other remain unexplored and even lost in many cases as many coins may remain unexposed. Therefore, it is worth educating more people on epigraphy of Bengal Sultānate coins for bringing unknown phases of history of Bengal into light. This volume combines history of Bengal, well noted and new, along with epigraphic study as these two things are related. Epigraphic study is the process and history that comes in light, is the output. Calligraphy, on the other hand is one of the most neglected issues in the area of study of numismatics of Bengal Sultānate that has received importance in this work. The main aim of the volume is educating more people about coins of the sultānate period of Bengal that may help bringing more and more unknown stories of Bengal Sultānate in light.

**Md. Shariful Islam**

# Acknowledgements

All praise be to Allah, who graced us with this task. Idea about this book came in mind when we were working on the first book 'Understanding the Coins of Bengal: Ancient to Early Modern Period'. As the said volume had a focus on coins of Bengal from different periods, we could cover only a few coins from sultānate period of Bengal. This insisted me to think about a volume that will focus only on sultānate period coins of Bengal that may cover as many types of coins of this period as may be plausible.

Mohammad Abdur Rahim, co-author of this volume, is a prominent calligraphist in Bangladesh. He is secretary at Bangladesh Calligraphy Society. I came across his works via social media that amazed me. I thought that the work will be enriched by many folds if he would have joined the project. Thanks to him. He agreed to work in the project. I feel, if anything makes the volume attractive to the readers, is because of his wonderful drawings of the inscriptions on the sultānate period coins of Bengal that has become foundation of all later analysis of the coins in this volume.

My beloved friend Md. Mosharrof Hossain, co-author of the book 'Understanding the Coins of Bengal-Ancient to Early Modern Period' kindly gave his consent to work as associate in the project team. His heartfelt support tremendously improved the quality of the work and made it easier to complete.

At this stage I want to thank to numismatists and friends who helped the project by giving permission of using images of many Bengal Sultānate coins, which are not only difficult to find but also are really charming because of their beauty that added value to the volume. Stan Goron, S.M. Iftekhar Alam, Amit Mehta, Md. Robiul Islam, Noman Nasir, Md. Siful Islam, Husain Al-Bakar, Muhammad Shamsuddin, Aniket Sanyal, Zahid Mamun, Barnard and Aditya are among those whose coins or images have been used in this volume. I am also grateful to Classical Numismatic Group, LLC (CNG) and Todywalla Auctions for images of coins that have been retrieved from their websites. I thank to Jobayer Zihan, Tanim Abdullah, Jubair, Fahim Muntasir Niloy, Shihab Al Quraish, Sohel Rana Shemul, Md. Ibrahim, Md. Ruhulamin, Rajon Ahmed, Nasim Aktar, Hasib Mohammad Ashiq, Halima Akter Sathi and Nahid for their cooperation in photography of coins or archaeological sites. I am grateful to Shakil Huq and Mizanur Rahman for their extraordinary sincerity in work. Their sense of art and patience have upgraded the worth of the work manyfold.

We are thankful again to our family members who helped us and encouraged us a lot. This is an opportunity for me to acknowledge my parents. I express my thanks to my wife Dr. Rezwana Haque. This task was impossible without her support. The reviewers and editors also deserve thanks for helping in improving and upgrading the volume from its earlier versions.

**Md. Shariful Islam**

CHAPTER 1

# BENGAL SULTĀNATE

The national geopolitical boundary of Bengal, from ancient to medieval period, was never constant. Limits of Bengal always changed with change in time. In its heyday Bengal expanded from its origin on the south up to the sea, on the north up to Assam, on the east up to hilly areas of Sylhet and Tripura and on the west up to Bihar and Orissa to far western regions of Panjab of present India. But in bad times or during internal conflicts or fall of a dynasty, neighboring proximate to far distant kingdoms and dynasties encroached inside Bengal on several occasions. Again, geo-political map of ancient Bengal was not like that of medieval. That change extended till modern time. And we don't know the future.

Bengal is the name originated from *Bangala* that may have been derived from the name Banga. Zia Uddin Barni who was a later historian than Minhaj used the name *Bangala* for the first time.[1] He used Iqlim, Arsha and Diar as prefix to *Bangala*. He also mentioned Iqlim Lakhnautī and Diar Lakhnautī. Therefore, *Bangala* was a separate administrative division from Lakhnautī, the later was probably divided into Varind and Rar.[2]

Minhaj-i-Sirāj did not mention the region as Bengal or *Bangala*. Instead, on the description of expedition of Muslims to Bengal, Minhaj mentions Varind, Rar and *Banga* as three administrative divisions in this region. According to him *Lakhnautī* was divided by river Ganges leaving Varind on one side (eastern side) and Rar on the other (western side). Eastern part of Bengal was mentioned as Bengal.[3]

Bengal is the Anglicised name of *Bangala*. According to Blochmann before the conquest of Bengal by Bakhtiyar Khalji in CE 1203, Bengal was divided into five administrative districts such as, (1) *Radha*, the country west of the Hugli and south of the Ganges; (2) *Bagdi*, the delta of the Ganges; (3) *Banga*, the country to the east of, and beyond, the delta; (4) *Barendra* (Varind), the country to the north of the Padma and between the Karataya and the Mahananda rivers; and (5) *Mithila*, the country west of the Mahananda.[4]

Description given by Muhammad Mohar Ali about geographical boundary of the regions in those early years when Muslims conquered Bengal and which were later annexed in Sultānate period Bengal includes name of Banga, Rar, Samatata, Gaur,

---

[1] A. Karim, *Banglar Itihas (Sultani Amal),* Jatiya Sahitya Prokash, Dhaka, 2007, pp. 13-4.

[2] Z. Barani, *Tarikh i Fīrūz Shahi,* (B.I. series), Calcutta, 1862, pp. 53, 93, 593.

[3] Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* trans. By Major H.G. Raverty, 1881, Reprinted, New Helhi, 1970, p. 74.

[4] H. Blochmann, *Contribution to the Geography and History of Bengal,* Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1968 (rpt. 2003), p. 3. Also note due to difference in spelling Rar has been mentioned as Radha and Varind as Barendra.

and Varind.[5] Banga was located to eastern and southern of Bengal[6] which was demarcated by Bhagirathi-Hugli on the west and the main channel of the Ganges (*Ganga* in present India and Padma in Bangladesh) in the east to south-east. Western Bengal was known as Rar (*Radha*) which lies to the west of the river Hugli-Bhagirathi. The eastern section, known as Samatata, where the capital of present time Bangladesh lies, was situated on the eastern part of the main channel of the Ganges. Northern Bengal was initially known as Pundrabardhana and later was renamed as Varind. This section lies on the north of the Ganges and the west of Brahmaputra. Gaur was a city in the Varind region and this city was very famous and of high importance and status. Its status was as the capital of the Varind and center of the neighboring kingdoms of Varind. Rulers of the then independent kingdoms under later boundary of Sultānate Bengal who could occupy Gaur, would take the title *Gaureswar* meaning 'the lord of Gaur'. During medieval period from the time when Muslims expanded their territory in Bengal until the capture of the political power by the British, Bengal included the area that is now independent Bangladesh, the West Bengal of India, parts of Bihar in the west, Assam in the east and, at times, a segment of Orissa in the south-west. According to Muhammad Mohar Ali 'the area is situated roughly within 27° and 21° latitudes and 92.5° and 87° longitudes.'[7]

[5] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p. 3.

[6] Please see the map of Bengal during Sultānate period.

[7] M.M. Ali, op.cit., p. 1.

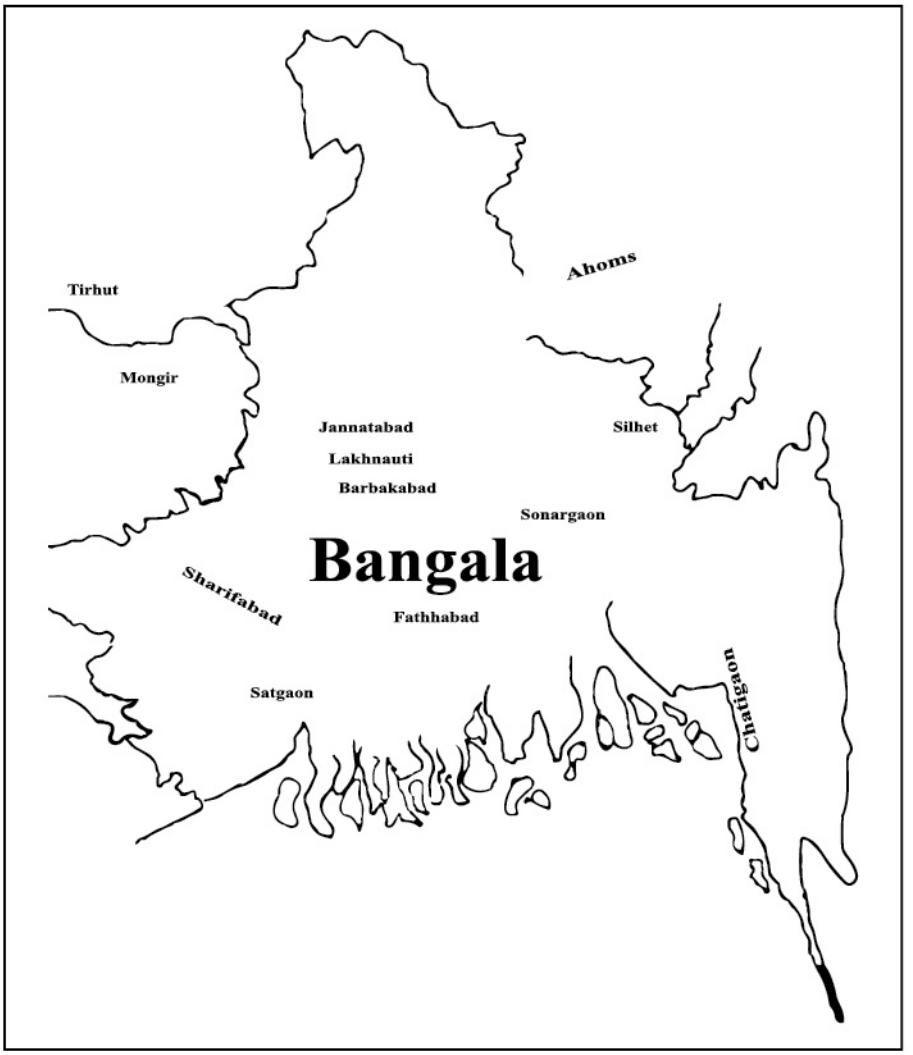


**Figure 1.1: Map of Bengal during Sultānate Period**

At that time Banga was a country to the east of and beyond the delta.[8] Though capital of Bengal was not always restricted to that old region of Banga, from origin of the name it may be anticipated that both Muslims and Europeans who came to rule this region, meant Banga as an important place of Bengal. Abdul Karim (2007) writes that the names Banga and Bangala were used in pre-Islamic Bengal.[9] The land Bengal is originally and almost a vast alluvial plain, mostly floodplain. A small part of it is uplifted blocks and hills. The floodplain is result of the network of rivers the *Ganga*

[8] H. Blochmann, op. cit., p. 3.

[9] A. Karim, op. cit., pp. 13-4.

(Ganges), the Brahmaputra, the Jamuna and the Meghna and their large number of distributaries and effluents.[10]

According to Abdul Karim, historian Shams-i-Sirāj Afif mentioned sultān of Bengal Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh as *Shāh-i-Bangala*.[11] Shams al-Dīn Ilyās was the first sultān of Bengal who unified Lakhnautī, Banga and Rar. Therefore, Sirāj Afif's *Bangala* was the whole Bengal that included entire the administrative divisions mentioned by Abul Fazl.

From the description of Abul Fazl we come to know that, *subé Bangla* during Mughal period was spread from Chittagong to Teliagarh by 400 crosh in the east to west and in the north to south from the hills of the north to Mandaran of Hugli of the south by 200 crosh. On the west side of Bengal it was boundary of *subé* Bihar. Kamrup and Assam was also on the border of *subé Bangla*.[12] Therefore, Banga was not the center of Bengal during Muslim period of Bengal or even earlier. Therefore, question arises, why Bengal took its name from a lesser important kingdom or administrative division Banga. That question remains unanswered. Probably Arabs were familiar with the name Banga and they took that name for their kingdom in this region. In the scanned segment of the old map published by Blochman[13] in fig. 1.2 Bengal is presented as a region surrounded by hills. Hence Bengal was known as an invincible delta surrounded by hills and probably also jungle. Chittagong was the main entrance to Bengal for them. That is why Chittagong has been named as Dākhil Banjaliya or entrance to Bengal.

**Figure 1.2: Old map of Bengal**

[10] H. Brammer, *Bangladesh: Landscapes, Soil Fertility and Climate Change*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 2016, pp. 11-27.

[11] Afif, Tarikh i Fīrūz Shahi, p. 114-118 in Abdul Karim (2007), p.14.

[12] Ain i Akbari, Volume 2, trans. Jerret, p.116.

[13] H. Blochmann, op. cit., plate IV, originally from Blaev's Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Vol. II., Amsterdam, 1650.

## SOURCES OF HISTORY

Main sources of history of the pre-Mughal period of Bengal may be classified into five categories such as, (a) contemporary chronicles written at Delhi; (b) coins and inscriptions of the Bengal Muslim rulers; (c) works by early and contemporary Arab scholars; (d) contemporary writings in Bengal; and (e) accounts of foreign observers and travelers.[14] Coins supply historical data such as specific dates of the rulers that help in determining chronology and order of succession of the rulers, minting towns that provide information on geographic jurisdiction of the rulers, some historical events such as legends used to commemorate such events, and often titles or legends of the coins that may reflect spirit and attitude of the rulers, etc. Regarding importance of coins in writing history of Bengal Muhammad Mohar Ali says, 'the inscriptions, together with the coins, may therefore be regarded as the most solid and unimpeachable sources of information on the history of the period."[15] This indicates that coins are one of the most important and the most reliable sources based on which history of Bengal has been written and still getting modified by new discoveries.

## PHASES IN BENGAL SULTĀNATE

The spread of Islam in this region marked an epoch as Sultānate period in the history of Bengal. But the whole of the Bengal Sultānate chapter has not yet been fully explored by us. New evidences discovered by archaeologists and numismatists are adding new data to the history of Bengal of this period. Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq so rightly said, "The early account of the spread of Islam in Bengal is shrouded in myth and mystery due to the intricate nature of its history, complexities of its social evolution and the diversities of its religious traditions and popular beliefs."[16] It has been mentioned earlier that[17] coins and inscriptions of the Bengal Muslim rulers is considered as one of the five major sources of recording history of pre-Mughal period of Bengal. Commentaries of contemporary foreign historians and travelers also have been used as reference. Most quoted contemporary commentaries that have descriptions about Bengal are *Ain-i-Akbari, Tabaquat-i-Akbari, Tarikh-i-Firishta* and travel of Ibn Botuta. But in those sources Bengal came as a short reference when there was an incidence of Delhi or other Sultānate with Bengal or when the respective traveler had a visit to Bengal. Therefore, those historical records cover a very small part of the whole history of medieval Bengal. While contemporary chronicles written by historians are considered as another major important source of history, *Reaz-us-Salatin* by Salim (1788) is considered as the first comprehensive text on history of Bengal Sultānate or medieval Bengal. But still *Reaz-us-Salatin* was not as complete as it was required. That was caused by very small number of numismatic evidences and stone inscriptions available at the time when the book was composed.

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[14] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p.9

[15] Ibid., p.14.

[16] Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq, Advent of Islam in Bengal: An Epigraphic Approach, DOI: 10.7763/IPEDR. 2012, Vol. 48, no. 6, 2012, p.24.

[17] M.M. Ali, op. cit., pp. 8-26.

That also resulted into controversies among modern scholars. In the later period, based on additional discoveries, new data have been added to the history of this era. Later findings solved many, not all, of those controversial issues. In the following relevant chapters of the volume a brief note of the relevant sultānate period of Bengal have been given along with illustrations of coins by dividing the whole sultānate period into governor period, early independent sultānates, house of raja Ganesh, second phase of Ilyās shāhi dynasty, habshi rulers, Husain shāhi dynasty, Mughal and Sūrī interlude, Muhammad shāhi dynasty, and Karrānī dynasty.

## RULERS ON SULTĀNATE PERIOD COINS OF BENGAL (Based on Discovered Coins Only)

| Serial No. | Name of the Rulers | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 1 | Ikhtiyar al-Dīn Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji INO Muhammad bin Sām | 600-2 | 1203-6 |
| 2 | Rukun al-Dīn ‘Alī Mardān | 607-9/10 | 1210-2/3 |
| 3 | Shams al-Dīn Īltutmish (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 4 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iwad Khalji (also with ‘Alī Sher Burhan) | 610-24 | 1213-27 |
| 5 | Daulat Shāh bin Maudūd (Joint Issue) | 627 | 1230 |
| 6 | Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 7 | Jalalat al-Dīn Radiyya (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 8 | Mu’izz al-Dīn Bahrām (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 9 | ‘Alā al-Dīn Masūd (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 10 | Qamar al-Dīn Tamar Khan Kiran (Anonymous) | 642-4 | 1244-6 |
| 11 | Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 12 | Mughith al-Dīn Yūzbak | 651-5 | 1253-7 |
| 13 | Ghiyāth al- Dīn Balban (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 14 | Muiz al-Dīn Tughril | 674-80 | 1275-81 |
| 15 | Jalāl al-Dīn Mahmūd | 686-7 | 1287-8 |
| 16 | Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd (Bughra Khan, s/o Balban) | 680-8 | 1282-9 |
| 17 | Rukn al-Dīn Kaikāūs (s/o Bughra Khan) | 689-700 | 1290-1300 |
| 18 | Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh | 700-22 | 1300-22 |
| 19 | Shihab al-Dīn Bugda Shāh (s/o Fīrūz Shāh) | 717-8 | 1317-8 |
| 20 | Jalāl al-Dīn Kurban/Guzban Shāh | 719 | 1319 |
| 21 | Shams al-Dīn Daulat Shāh | nd | nd |
| 22 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh (s/o Fīrūz Shāh) | 717-28 | 1317-28 |
| 23 | Nāsir al-Dīn Ibrahim Shāh (s/o Fīrūz Shāh) (Joint Issue) | 724-7 | 1324-7 |
| 24 | Muhammad bin Tughluq (Sultān of Delhi) | | |

| Serial No. | Name of the Rulers | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 25 | Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh | 734-50 | 1333-49 |
| 26 | ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Alī Shāh | 742-6 | 1341-5 |
| 27 | Ikhtiyar al-Dīn Ghāzī Shāh (s/o Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak) | 750-3 | 1349-52 |
| 28 | Shams al-Dīn Iliyās Shāh | 746-58 | 1345-57 |
| 29 | Sikandar Shāh (s/o Iliyās Shāh) | 758-92 | 1357-89 |
| 30 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn A’zam Shāh (s/o Sikandar Shāh) | 792-813 | 1389-1410 |
| 31 | Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh (s/o A’z̲am Shāh) | 813-5 | 1410-2 |
| 32 | Shihab al-Dīn Bāyazīd Shāh (s/o Hamzah Shāh) | 815-7 | 1412-4 |
| 33 | ‘Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (s/o Bāyazīd Shāh) | 817 | 1414 |
| 34 | Qutb al-Dīn A’zam Shāh | nd | nd |
| 35 | Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar | nd | nd |
| 36 | Nāsir al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh | nd | nd |
| 37 | Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh (s/o Danuja Marddana) | 818-9; 821-36 | 1415-6; 1418-32 |
| 38 | Danuja Marddana Deva/Raja Ganesh (se 1339-40) | 819-21 | 1416-8 |
| 39 | Mahendra Deva (s/o Danuja Marddana, se 1340) | 821 | 1418 |
| 40 | Shams al-Dīn Ahmad Shāh (s/o Jalal al-Dīn) | 836-7 | 1432-3 |
| 41 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh | 837 | 1433-4? |
| 42 | Nāsir al-Dīn Shahim Shāh | 837? | 1433-4? |
| 43 | Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh | 832; 837-64 | 1428; 1433-59 |
| 44 | Rukn al-Dīn Barbak Shāh (s/o Mahmūd Shāh) | 864-79 | 1459-74 |
| 45 | Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh (s/o Barbak Shāh) | 879-85 | 1474-81 |
| 46 | Nūr al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh (s/o Mahmūd Shāh) | 885 | 1481 |
| 47 | Jalāl al-Dīn Fath Shāh (s/o Mahmūd Shāh) | 886-93 | 1481-7 |
| 48 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Barbak Shāh (Shahjada Barbak) | 893 | 1487-8 |
| 49 | Saif al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh | 893-6 | 1488-90 |
| 50 | Qutb al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (s/o Saif al-Dīn Fīrūz) | 896 | 1490 |
| 51 | Shams al-Dīn Muz̲affar Shāh | 896-9 | 1490-3 |
| 52 | ‘Alā al-Dīn Husain Shāh | 899-925 | 1493-1519 |
| 53 | Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh (s/o Husain Shāh) | 925-38 | 1519-31 |
| 54 | ‘Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (s/o Nusrat Shāh) | 938-9 | 1531-2 |

| Serial No. | Name of the Rulers | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 55 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (s/o Husain Shāh) | 939-45 | 1532-8 |
| 56 | Humāyūn (Mughal Emperor of India) | 945 | 1538-9 |
| 57 | Sher Shāh (Emperor of India) | 945-52 | 1538-45 |
| 58 | Islām Shāh (Emperor of India) | 952-60 | 1545-52 |
| 59 | Muhammad ʻĀdil (Emperor of Hindustan) | 960 | 1552 |
| 60 | Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh Ghāzī | 961-3 | 1553-5 |
| 61 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh (s/o Muhammad Shāh Ghāzī) | 963-8 | 1555-60 |
| 62 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jalāl Shāh (s/o Muhammad Shāh Ghāzī) | 968-71 | 1560-3 |
| 63 | Dāūd Shāh Karrānī (s/o Sulaimān) | 980-4 | 1572-6 |

# MOSQUES AND MONUMENTS FROM SULTĀNATE BENGAL

**60 Dome Mosque,** also known as Shat Gambuj Mosque, is located at Bagerhat in Bangladesh. It was constructed during CE 1442-59 by Ulugh Khan, the governor of Khulna region during sultān Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmud Shāh.

Tomb of **Khan Jahan Ali,** who's original name was Ulugh Khan, is located at Bagerhat in Bangladesh. He died in CE 1459. He was governor in Khulna region who constructed mosques and tanks in his jurisdiction. People know him as a saint than a general or governor.

**Bagha Mosque** is a brick built mosque located at Bagha of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. The original stone of the mosque (now in Karachi) inscribes that it was constructed by sultān Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh in CE 1523.

The exact year of construction of the **Chamchika/Khania Dighi Mosque** is not known but is assumed that it was constructed in the 15th century CE. It is located at Baliadighi village in Chapainawabganj, Bangladesh.

**Choto Sona Mosque** is located at Chapainawabganj in Bangladesh. This mosque, built of stone and brick, was erected by sultān ʻAlā al-Dīn Hussain Shāh between CE 1493-1519.

**Darasbari Madrasa,** located in Shibganj Upazilla of Chapainawabganj, Bangladesh was erected by sultān ʻAlā al-Dīn Hussain Shāh in the year CE 1504.

**Darasbari Mosque** was built in brick in CE 1479 at Shibganj Upazilla of Chapainawabganj, Bangladesh. The mosque was constructed by sultān Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh.

**Kusumba Mosque** is located at Manda Upazilla of Naogaon District in Bangladesh. The mosque was constructed by a high official named Sulaiman during the last sūrī sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh in the year CE 1558-9.

**Baro Sona Mosque,** also known as Baro-duari, is located in Malda, West Bengal at Indian part of *Gour*. The construction of the mosque was started by sultān 'Ala al-Dīn Husain Shāh and was completed in CE 1526 by his son sultān Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh.

**Eklakhi Mausoleum** was constructed around in CE 1425 at Pandua in Malda district, West Bengal, India. It has three tombs, possibly belonging to sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh, his wife and his son Shams al-Dīn Ahmad Shāh. Probably 1,00,000 Tanka was spent in construction of the mausoleum, so named Eklakhi.

**Qutub Shāhi Mosque** is at Pandua, in West Bengal, India. Its construction was completed in CE 1583 by a descendant of Nur Qutb al-Alam that falls in the Mughal period though. But from its design and name it is presumed that its construction was started during Sultanate period of Bengal.

**Dakhil Darwaza,** also known as Salami Darwaza and Gaur gate, is the entrance gate of Gaur located in Malda district of India. It is suggested that it was erected by sultān Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh.

CHAPTER 2

# COINS OF BENGAL SULTĀNATE

The early coinage of Bengal Sultānate was largely influenced by the Delhi Sultānate as at that time Bengal was ruled by Delhi and local governors issued coins in the names of their master or declared independence and issued coins in their own names while followed the style of Delhi coinage. With the establishment of Delhi Sultānate in the early 13th century CE, Indian coinage witnessed a fundamental change in the format. During this time inscriptions became the prime feature of the coins which replaced pictorial devices such as bull and horseman which were mainly used in Jittals, though horseman featured on a few early type tankas. Inscriptions on these coins were written in Arabic and later in Persian Language. Raja Ganesh issued a few coins carrying inscriptions in ancient Bengali. When Bengal became independent of Delhi, she produced a large volume of diverse type of coins that carry its own identity. The later coins of Bengal Sultānate can easily be distinguished from earlier coins and from coins of other Sultānates of India for its different calligraphy, style and other features.

The inscriptions on the coins of medieval Bengal bear information carrying multiple importances. Most important information that those coins provide is about the names of the rulers in Bengal. There are at least six rulers of Bengal Sultānate whom we know only from their coins, while other possible sources are silent about them. Other important information that we get from these coins are the mints and dates which is linked with the area where the ruler reigned and the time when the ruler reigned in Bengal. Some of the inscriptions on these coins are religious in nature. The most common religious part of the inscriptions is the Kalima-i-shahāda *lā ilaha illallāhu muhammadur rasūl allāh* (There is no God but Allāh and prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is his messenger). Raja Ganesh introduced inscriptions showing obedience to *śrī chandi.* Some of the inscriptions are simply political in nature. For example, mentioning the name of Abbasid caliph is for pretending obedience to Islamic rulers. Another reason may be that, by combining their names with the name of the caliph, the local rulers intended to legitimize their own authority. Some of the coins carry names of both the Bengal rulers and Delhi sultāns showing dominion of Delhi Sultānate over Bengal. There are a few coins issued by Bengal Sultāns bearing the names of four caliphs of Islam showing religious faith and political obedience of the sultāns to caliphate.

Coins of Bengal Sultānate also reveal the title of the Sultāns. Sultāns of Bengal have used multifarious titles in the legend of their coins, which sometimes mention the ruler as *al-imām al-a'ẕam* (the greatest leader), *yamīn khīlafat* (right hand of the caliph), *nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn* (helper of the commander of the faithful), *ghawath al-islām wa'l muslimīn* (succourer of islām and the muslims), *khalīfat allāh bil hujjat wa'l burhan* (khalīfa/caliph of the God by proof and testimony). For example, Sikandar shāh used the title *al-mujahid fi sabeel al-rahman* (the warrior on the path of the compassionate) and *al-nāsir al-dīn allāh al-qahhar ali allāh* (the aider of Allāh's faith,

the subdue of Allāh); Hussain shāh introduced titles such as *al-sultān al-ʿadil al-bazil* (the just, generous sultān); ʻAla al-Dīn ʻAlī Shāh in his coins used the epithet *sikandar bi zaman al-makhsus bi inayat rahman* (Alexander of the world, the distinguished on by the grace of the compassionate), etc.

The titles or epithets of the sultāns of Bengal are usually placed on the obverse and often are extended to the reverse. Those titles, in common cases, start with *al-sultān al-aʼẕam* (the greatest sultān) and in some other cases as *al-sultān al-ʻadil*. There are also evidences to start the titles with *al-muʼyad bi tayeed al-rahmān* (the one strengthened by the support of the compassionate) and also with *al-sultān bin al-sultān* (sultān son of sultān). The name part of the sultān is usually divided in two sections. The first part of the name (laqab) is usually placed after *al-sultān al-aʼẕam/ʻadil* (the greatest/just sultān). Then the laqab is commonly followed by *al-dunyā wa'l dīn* (of the temporal world and of the religion) followed by a kunyat such as *abū'l muẕaffar* (the father of the victorious) or *abū'l muzahid* (the father of the warrior) or *abū'l fath* (the father of the victorious or opener). After that the last name (ism) of the sultān is placed that is almost commonly followed by the title *shāh*. If the sultān is the founder of the Sultānate or a usurper, then *shāh* is followed by *al-sultān*. If the sultān is a son of a sultān, then *shāh* is followed by *al-sultān ibn* or *bin* or *binte al-sultān*. Other than title of the sultān, the coins usually bear dates of issue of the coins and the mint from which the coins have been issued. Dates are often in numerals and in other cases in verbal form. These are usual formats of inscriptions found in coins of Bengal Sultānate. There may have existences of variations from this style or format. Sultānate coins of Bengal have been classified into many fold by different authors based on features or styles of those coins. For example, Governor period coins reflect influence and style of Delhi Sultānate; Independent Sultanates coins show pure Bengal style and weight while Sūrī and Karrānī coins clearly differ from the previous coins in style and weight.

## MINT CITIES

Minting of coins was decentralized during Bengal Sultānate. There are numerous mint locations identified from coins of Bengal Sultānate and many of them have been discovered and published in recent works.[1] Most important mint towns of this time are Lakhnautī (Gaud/Malda), Fīrūzabād (Pandua), Sūnargaon (Dhaka), Muaẕẕamabād (in Maymensingh), Fatahbād (Faridpur), Husainābād (Chobbish porgona or Murshidabād), Chatgaon/Dākhil Banjaliya (Chittagong), Khalīfatabād (Bagerhat of Khulna), and Sātgaon (near Hugli). Other mint towns that are mentioned by

[1] S.M.I. Alam, 'An up-to-date list of mints of the Bengal Sultānate (AH 601-984)', Mudra (a souvenir published on 3rd coin exhibition-2015, Dhaka), 2015, pp. 15-28; M.S. Islam, 'Dakhil Balapur: A Newly Discovered Mint of Bengal Sultānate', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* no. 226, 2016, pp. 21-2.

numismatists are Arkan, Banga (Eastern Bengal), Bangala (Eastern Bengal), Barbakabād (in Naogaon), Chandrabād, Chawalistan (Assam), Dār al-Darb, Dawabād, Gaur, Dākhil Bālāpūr (possibly in Norshingdi), Lakūr (Birbhum), Ghiyathpūr, Hajipur (Patna), Jannatabād, Khairabād, Khazānah, Mahmudabād, Maz(/n)daran (Hugli), Muhammadabād, Mustafabād, Muẕaffarabād, Nāsirabād, Nūdyā (Nadia or Naudah), Nusratabād, Pandua (Malda), Patna, Rohillabād Badrpūr, Rasūlpūr (Patna), Ruhanpūr (Chapainawabganj), Ruknabād (Chapainawabganj), Sajla Mankhabād (Hugli or Bardhaman), Sayyidabād, Shahr-i-nau, Shamsabād, Sharifabād (Bardhaman), Sikandarabād, Tanda (Malda), Srihat (Sylhet), Simūr, Saifabād, Tirhut Mardan (Patna), etc. But due to lack of descriptions from contemporary records about geopolitical map, most of the identifications of the mint locations of Bengal are tentative. They are identified based on partial maps of contemporary period or of current names and anticipated conjectures of the locations to that time.

## CHALLENGES IN READING COINS

Reading the inscriptions on Bengal Sultānate coins are exceedingly challenging. It has been such for several reasons. One of the most common features of these coins is that the inscriptions are often written using local styles of calligraphy where many of them are not readable because of the obscure lettering of the legends. In many of those coins calligraphers or die cutters did not follow specific order of presenting phrases or words in the legend. On many coins phrases are jumble. More commonly coin planchets were smaller than the dies. As a result many of the important information of the coins remain out of the coin planchets. One added feature of Bengal Sultānate coins is shroff marks or banker marks, which are very common adding further challenge in reading inscriptions on the coins as they obfuscate the legends. Here coins 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 have been presented to evince difficulties of reading Bengal Sultānate coins caused by either one or a combination of more than one of the above mentioned factors. Here it is needed to read the name of the mint mentioned on the margin by combining the inscriptions from three same type coins. Therefore, it needs expertise and knowledge in most of the cases to read the whole legend on a coin. Sometimes researchers have to wait for long time to find more specimens of rare types or rare rulers' coins for precisely reading legends on the coins or eliciting important data from them.

**Coin 2.1**

**Coin 2.2**

**Coin 2.3**

From coin 2.1 we can read only *arsha* as name of the mint of the coin. From coin 2.2 *arsha sāt* can be read. From coin 2.3 awfully only a word *kānū* can be read. From a single coin of the three presented here, it is not possible to conclusively tell the full name of the mint of this type of coin. By combining data from all three coins one may conclude about the name of the mint as *arsha sātkānū (sātgaon).*

**Coin 2.1**

*arsha*

**Coin 2.2**

*arsha sāt*

**Coin 2.3**

*kānū*

It is true that for this specific coin type probably there is available specimens which show full mint name on a single coin. But for many coins researchers are not often so lucky. In the following section another set of coins of Bengal Sultānate have been presented to exemplify challenges faced in reading inscriptions on them.

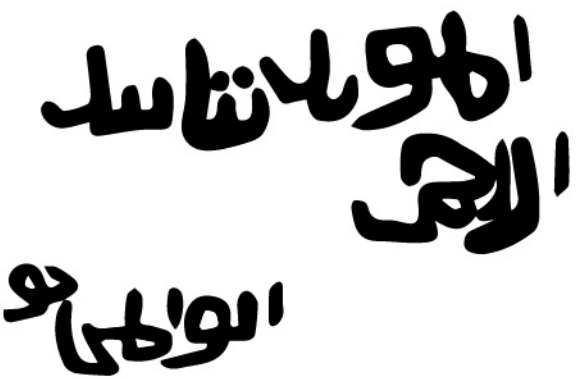
**Coin 2.4**

**Coin 2.5**

**Coin 2.6**

Coin 2.4 presents an example of over struck coin of Hamzah Shāh making this coin almost impossible to read and decipher. Coin 2.5 is a cleanly struck coin but important inscriptions are out of planchet. Top and central part of the legend is readable while leaving part of ruler's name and his dynastic ancestors out of planchet. Coin 2.6 clearly shows the name of the ruler and his ancestor (central and bottom part of the legend) while leaving the top section partly or fully unreadable. Therefore, important readable sections have been firstly identified and noted from three specimens as follows:

**Coin 2.4**



**Coin 2.5**

**Coin 2.6**

In this case researchers having knowledge of only these three specimens must combine the inscriptions on them to decipher the full legend. Combining the three important sections from the above coins, the whole legend can be reconstructed as it is presented in fig. 2.1 and 2.2.

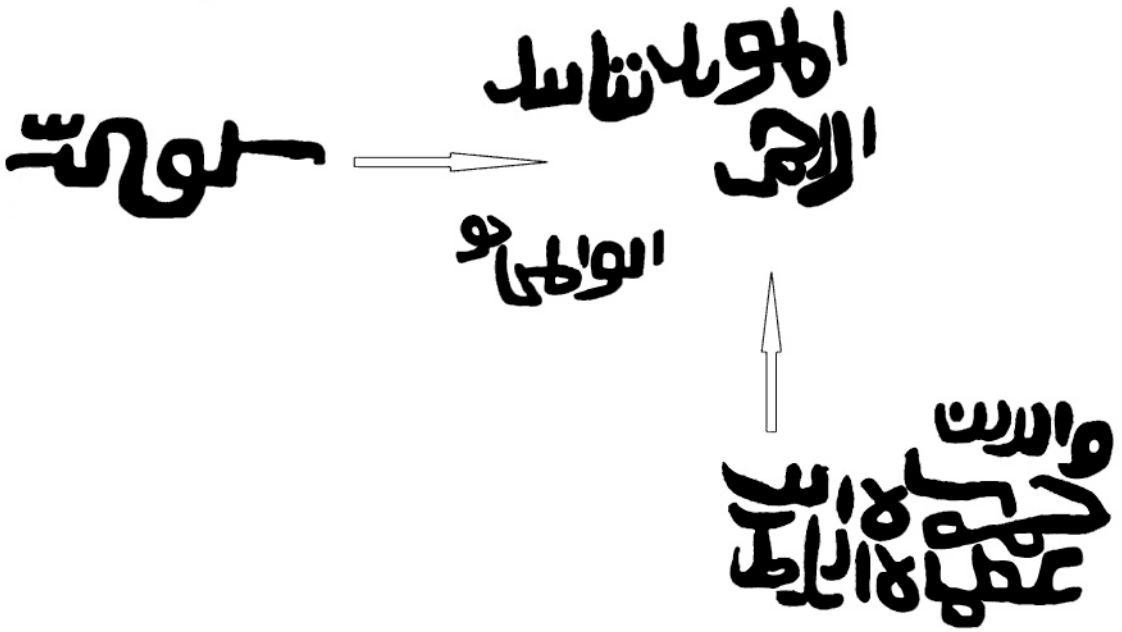


**Figure 2.1: Derivation of the Full Legend**

**Figure 2.2: Derived Full Legend**

Considering the characteristics of the coins and challenges, the authors of the volume have tried to use the best available coins' specimens and their photographs. Exceptions are a few cases where better specimens could not be collected or it was necessary to use for the sake of discussions.

# ROLE OF BANKERS IN THE COINAGE

As said earlier banker marks known as shroff marks are very common with Bengal Sultānate tanka. There are a wide variety of shroff marks ranging from different types of floral symbols to insects to letters, etc. A Husain Shāhi tanka[2] bears four Bengal letters in a fixed sequence indicating a probable name of the revenue official. Many of the marks have no significant identified meaning to present day researchers while a few of them have been translated into a meaningful objects. A set of banker marks have been presented in a paper that shows importance of bankers of the medieval Bengal in the monetary system of the time. In another paper Nicholas Rhodes (2010) shows an image of a Bengal coin of Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat which bears a shroff mark of a lion walking to the right on a large punch mark where the lion seems like the lion found on the coins of Dhanya Manikya of Tripura (CE 1490-526).[3] Rhodes also shows a number of examples of Bengal coins with punch marks of lion heads that resembles with lion heads found on contemporary Tripura silver coins.

In a recently published paper[4] Md. Shariful Islam, author of the volume, presents a set of images of coins found from Chittagong region bearing a few bankers' shroff marks on them which are not recorded or seen on Bengal coins from other hoards. Based on the available evidences on the coins, the paper argues that Chittagong or a region nearby became an economic zone where, for a certain period, the role of bankers became more important than that of the official mint or the authority of local or neighboring rulers in the region. Strikingly the said banker marks on the set of coins have been found on coins of different kingdoms such as Bengal sultānate, Tripura, Portuguese Malacca and a few blank planchets, showing the importance and influence of bankers in this region, especially during a period when control of the port was being contested, and for which other primary source material is not available.

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[2] J.S. Deyell , 'A silver tanka of Bengal sultān, Ala de Dīn Husain Shāh, countermarked with the title of ... a revenue official?', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 211, 2012, p. 45.

[3] N.G. Rhodes, 'Some coins countermarked in Tripura', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 203, 2010, pp. 14-6.

[4] M.S. Islam, 'Bankers' Role in the Monetary System of Bengal Sultānate- A Focus on Chittagong Region', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 229, 2017, pp. 27-32.

# Origin of Coins and Bankers' Shroff Marks on the Series

**Bengal/cross**

**Portuguese Malacca/cross**

**Tripura/cross, flat bar**

**Blank /cross, flat bar**

**Bengal/cross, sun, lion**

**Bengal/lion, shell**

**Bengal/shell**

**Tripura/shell**

**Blank /shell**

**Bengal/shell, flat bar**

**Bengal/shell, flat bar, cross**

The mix of coins in the hoard, i.e., coins of the Bengal Sultānate, Tripura, the Portuguese and unusually blank planchets with the same set of bankers' shroff marks, singly or in combination shows that bankers' shroff marks on those coins were more important than the origin of those coins. It is evident from close observation of the coins that silver was removed by sharp tools from the official coins of Bengal and Tripura making those coins underweight. Yet the mixture of the coins and the removal of silver that could be easily seen with the bare eye did not void the coins. An admittedly serious weakness of the said study is that it could observe images of only approximately just over a third of the total number of coins of the original hoard, thus limiting the inferences drawn in the said paper. Despite this weakness, it has been possible to draw certain links among the available images of coins based on the shroff marks on them. Based on the available features, such as coins of different kingdoms being in the hoard and the particular bankers' shroff marks on most of them which have not usually been seen on Bengal coins discovered in other hoards so far, it is inferred that those coins of the hoard originated from different kingdoms including blank planchets bearing shroff marks such as shell, cross, flat bar and tentative lion were used in a small geographical region, most likely in the Chittagong-based economic zone, where the role of bankers was financially more important than the role of the rulers in whose names the coins were struck. As the argued coins have different but interlinked shroff marks, it may indicate involvement of more than one banker in the said economic zone. A few of those coins that bear two or three out of those four discussed shroff marks may indicate that those coins passed through more than one of those bankers of the region. The presence of some coins of Tripura and the crude shroff mark of an intended Tripura lion on Bengal Sultānate coins also suggests that the said economic zone included a part of Tripura, too. The Portuguese coins in the hoard assert that the said economic zone had business or relations with Portuguese at the time. The blank planchets may indicate a shortage of coins or minting facilities at that particular moment in the said economic zone, or the planchets were created privately and accepted as currency in the temporary absence of any central authority. Hence, the regional bankers and their shroff marks became financially more important at that time than the origin or any other important features of the circulating coins, making the area a special economic zone at that particular time.[5]

## More on Bankers' Role

In the previous section bankers' role during Sultānate period in a specific situation or time or a geographic region has been conjectured, while shroff marks as a common feature on Bengal Sultānate coins have been well documented by other

[5] This finding resembles with findings of Rila Mukherjee where Mukherjee claims that there was struggle over Sandwip between medieval kingdoms such as Bengal, Tripura and Arakan while it was briefly held by Portuguese. That brief reign of Portugues over Sandwip has been mentioned by them as 'minor' settlement as part of their 'informal empire' in the Bay of Bengal. It is possible that coins of the particular series were used in the said informal empire in the Bay. Please see more in R. Mukherjee, 'The Struggle for the Bay: The Life and Times of Sandwip, an almost unknown Portuguese port in the Bay of Bengal in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Revista da Faculdade de Letras Historia*, Porto, III, vol. 9, 2008, pp. 67-88.

researchers. In the following section a common shroff mark have been presented on three coins of three different dynasties and times of Bengal Sultānate that shows importance of banker marks during Sultānate period in Bengal. It shows that three coins bearing rulers' name of other dynasties have passed through possibly a single banker indicating importance of banker marks for coins as currency and that the currency system was as liberal as accepting coins of previous rulers at times as means of exchange.

**Coin of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad with Star Mark**

**Coin of Rukn al-Dīn Barbak with Star Mark**

**Coin of Husain Shāh with Star Mark**

A single known example has been presented below that is a blank planchet originally found along with a few coins of Bengal Sultānate only. Banker mark on this particular specimen differs from those of earlier mentioned hoard of Chittagong region. It is clear that the shorff mark made the blank planchet money like those issued in the name of the sultāns. This different specimen also indicates that bankers played a vital role in the monetary system of different times and regions in Bengal Sultānate.

**A Different Banker Mark on Blank Planchet**

CHAPTER 3

# EPIGRAPHY

An epigraph is an inscription on a building, statue, or coin.[1] Epigraphy is the study of texts inscribed on durable materials such as stones, metals, etc., which is considered as a sub discipline of classics. In the subsequent chapters inscriptions on sultānate period coins of Bengal have been studied with a focus on analyzing the inscriptions on them, their calligraphic forms and meaning. As the legends of coins of Bengal Sultānate have been inscribed mainly in Arabic alphabets, being the short period of Danuja Marddana Deva and Mahendra Deva as exception, and Islamic world had the tradition of high level artistic calligraphy,[2] Islamic calligraphy or Arabic calligraphy needs to be introduced. In the following section a lead-in discussion on calligraphy and its Islamic form and types have been presented before arranging the epigraphic analysis of the sultānate period coins of Bengal.

## CALLIGRAPHY

Calligraphy has been defined as 'art of beautiful stylized or elegant handwriting or lettering with pen or brush and ink. It involves the correct formation of characters, the ordering of the various parts, and the harmony of proportions. In the Islamic and Chinese cultures, calligraphy is as highly revered as painting.'[3] The word 'calligraphy' emerges from Greek words *Kallos* (beauty) and *graphos* (writing) that refers to writing in harmonious proportion of letters within a word or words on a page.[4] It has been viewed as script that exhibits exceptional and self conscious artistic and aesthetic quality in design and execution.[5] According to Studley, calligraphy is a 'skill'. In his definition Studley introduces the connection of art with calligraphy by involving 'touch, pressure, hand movement, unity and the elusive quality that we term beauty'.[6] Great calligrapher of 12th Century (CE) Yakut al-Mustasimi incorporated spirituality in the definition of calligraphy by calling it as a 'spiritual geometry'.[7] According to Caliph 'Alī bin Abū Talib, 'the beautiful writing strengthens the clarity of righteousness'.[8] Here 'beautiful writing' likely indicates calligraphy. The definition of calligraphy mentioned earlier considers it as an 'art', while it is an art that has been honored the most and assiduously cultivated among art of all forms.[9]

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[1] *The Oxford Dictionary of Difficult Words,* Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, p. 157.
[2] R. Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy,* Oxford University Press, New York, 1998, pp. 68-9.
[3] Britannica ready reference encyclopedia, Encyclopaedia Britannica (India) Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, p. 132.
[4] M.D. Ekhtiar and C. Moore (ed.), *Art of the Islamic World: A Resource for Educators,* The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2012, p. 56.
[5] M.P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A guide to technical terms,* The British Library, London, 1994, p. 32.
[6] V. Studley, *Left-handed calligraphy,* Dover Publications, New York, 1991, p. 8.
[7] M.A. Rahim, 'Calligraphy Porichoy', *Rabindra Journal,* Vol. 62, No. 1, 2018, p. 40.
[8] Al-Jaburi M. Shukre, *The Birth of Arabic Calligraphy and its Development,* (in Arabic) Library Al-Shark al-Jadid, Baghdad, 1974, in R. Saoud, *Introduction to Muslim Art,* FSTC Limited, Manchester, 2004, p. 11.
[9] Cited in Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja, *Islamic Calligraphy and Muslim Identity: A Case Study of Kuwait,* Novel and Noble Communications, Helsinki, 2018, p. 25.

Fine calligraphy, irrespective of media such as paper, clay, stone, metal, etc., has been considered as one of the high achievements of Islamic culture.[10] Calligraphy on coins of Bengal Sultānate has connections to origin or background history of sultānate in Bengal, i.e., the sultānate being originated from the expansion of Islam from Central Arabia. Muslim state was originally established by and during Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in a large part of Arabia and his successors were known as the caliphs. In AH 661 ruling of the state (later a dynasty) shifted from western Arabia caliphate to the first dynastic caliphate, the Umayyad. Capital of this dynasty was shifted to Syria.[11] By a revolution Umayyad was overthrown by the house of Abbasid in AH 750. Capital was again shifted from Syria to Iraq (Baghdad). In the later part of the caliphate Arabs had to share power with non-Arab Persians and Seljuk Turks.[12] The Turks carried the new faith to India by conquest and preaching. In the tenth century, Abbasid caliphate was challenged by Fatimid dynasty, centre of which was Tunisia. Later in the 13th century the Mongols conquered the whole Southwest Asia who converted themselves to Islam.[13] In the post Mongol invasion period, Islamic world had five political centers, India as one of them, where a succession of Turkish Muslim dynasties ruled over most part of the country.[14]

In Islamic art figure motifs are mostly absent for a few reasons. Probably the strongest of all is that Islam prohibits use of them. Verse 59:24 of al-Qur'an declares, 'He is Allāh, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner (of creation). His are the names most beautiful. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth extols His glory. His is the most mighty, the most wise.' In this verse the underlined term Fashioner (Musawwir) is the term used for a painter, therefore, an artist who creates anything life like is considered as involved in blasphemous act with God.[15] Hadith from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also warns that artists of figured pictures are the worst of men.[16] Realizing the power of art as presentation technique in Christian churches, Muslim rulers adopted and introduced calligraphy to create powerful impact of the messages of Islam, especially of Al-Qur'an. Creativity of Muslim artists was channeled into decoration. As there was no scope for drawing figure motifs, artistic talents ultimately derived to 'calligraphy or floral and geometrical designs, as a characteristic of Islamic art.'[17] An old Arabic saying states that "purity of writing is purity of the soul" that indicates the importance of beautiful writing and hence of calligraphy.[18] Islamic world started practicing

[10] Philippe de Montebello in A. Schimmel, *Islamic Calligraphy,* The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, New York, 1992, p. 2.
[11] Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja, op. cit., p. 8.
[12] Ibid., p. 8.
[13] Ibid., p. 9.
[14] Ibid., p. 9.
[15] Ibid., p. 16.
[16] Ibid., p. 17.
[17] Ibid., p. 17.
[18] A. Schimmel, 1992, op.cit., p. 3.

calligraphy in Mosques and later it was spread in their coinage. Coinage of Bengal was not outside of this practice. It is evident from coins that in the early years Bengal Sultānate used horseman and Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh introduced lion motif on his coins. Use of horseman and lion motif was probably instigated by geo-political factors. In general, coinage of Bengal Sultānate mostly relied on inscriptions and hence on calligraphy.

Calligraphy plays a vital role in society. It provides a supplement of credibility, importance and attractions.[19] There have been explicit attractions for calligraphy among Muslim sultāns, princess, emirs or others. 'It became fashionable for a ruler to practice calligraphy.[20] It has been observed that a number of Ottoman, Safavid, Timurid and Mamluk rulers were patrons of calligraphy.[21] Arabic calligraphy became more than an art. It was 'protected by religion, used in politics, boasting aesthetic sophistication, sustained by a mystical credo, and subject of poetry and popular lore, more than an art form, calligraphy was a culture.'[22] By the late ninth and early tenth century calligraphy had become one of the hallmarks of the Islamic civilization.[23] The art of Arabic calligraphy had been firmly embedded by the fourteenth century in the Islamic cultures around the world.[24] The Arabic alphabet had been considered as linked with wealth and sophistication, such that it had ability to convey the prestige of Islamic aesthetics and a sense of intellect on their owner.[25]

'Calligraphy has accompanied the whole history of Islam in its own way. Wherever Islam was victorious in war or religion, the indigenous culture would reinterpret calligraphy.'[26] It has been observed that calligraphy has been tended to develop its own identity in Indian subcontinent. It is evident from the quote of Annemarie Schimmel who says, 'Turkish *taliq* tends to a slightly wider opening of the final semicircles of the rounded letters, whereas Indian *taliq,* like Indian *naskh,* often has rather tightly closed, perfectly circular endings.....There are some peculiar developments of the Arabic script in the eastern part of the Islamic world. Among them is the so called Bihari style, which was used in India mainly in the fifteenth century. The rules of Ibn Muqla were either unknown to or neglected by its calligraphers; in fact, its slowly thickening lower endings and the flat *swad* are reminiscent of Maghribi, and, as in that style, the decoration in colorful inks can

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[19] V. Atanasiu, 'The president and the calligrapher: Arabic calligraphy and its political use', *Studies on architecture, history and culture,* p. 2, Retrieved from internet.

[20] Ibid., p. 3.

[21] Ibid., p. 3-4.

[22] Ibid., p. 4.

[23] G. Burrows, *The Politics of Arabic Script,* A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University, 2016, p. 3

[24] N. Shabout, *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics,* University of Florida Press, Floridia, 2007); S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy,* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2006, Y. Tabbaa, 'The Transformation of Arabic Writing: Part I Quranic Calligraphy', *Ars Orientalis,* vol. 21, 1991, pp. 119-48; and W. Ali, *Modern Arab Art: An Overview,* in S.M. Nashashibi, *Forces of Change,* ed., International Council for Women in the Arts, Washington, 1994. Note that the role of calligraphy is explored in more depth in chapter 4; G. Burrows, *The Politics of Arabic Script,* A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University, 2016, p. 4

[25] V. Atanasiu, op. cit. ; I. Dolezalek, 'Fashionable Form and Tailor-Made Message: Transcultural Approaches to Arabic Script on the Royal Norman Mantle and Alb', *The Medieval History Journal* 15, vol. 2, 2012; A. Walker, 'Meaningful Mingling: Classicizing Imagery and Islamicizing Script in a Byzantine Bowl', *The Art Bulletin* 90, vol. 1, 2008, pp. 32-53 in G. Burrows, The Politics of Arabic Script, A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University, 2016, p. 4

[26] Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja, op. cit., p. 19

render a good Bihari manuscript quite beautiful. Again in the central Asian areas, influences of Mongolian and Chinese writing are palpable…' [27] Does it not indicate that the Arabic calligraphy in Bengal might have been influenced by local Brahmi or proto-Bangla writing style? Therefore, it is important to study the Arabic calligraphy on Bengal coins to know if they have unique features or not. Bengal was far from center of Islam. Even Bengal was far away from Delhi Sultānate. Therefore, the Islamic calligraphy of Bengal should have its uniqueness from main stream of Central Asia or from Delhi and that should have reflection in the coinage of Bengal. About one of the unique contributions of Bengal in Islamic calligraphy, Annemarie Schimmel says, 'One must not forget the powerful stone inscriptions with a highly decorative organization of the verticals in rhythmical parallelism, as found in the fifteenth-century Bengal,… an area whose contributions to the development of the art of Arabic epigraphy is usually overlooked…'[28] Also it should show influence of its origin. Annemarie Schimmel also says, 'In India the indigenous art of stone cutting, in which mainly Hindus excelled, was developed to create unusually powerful inscriptions. This is especially true of Bengal, where during the late fifteenth century a number of inscriptions for mosques were composed that doubtless rank among the finest examples of Islamic lettering.'[29] For the same reason the scripts on the coins of Bengal during Sultānate period we see use of Arabic scripts and we may anticipate that those Arabic scripts on coins of Bengal should have its differentiating features from other part of the contemporary Islamic world because of dominant local culture of Bengal. Though we find epigraphic studies on stone inscriptions of Bengal,[30] unfortunately this subject, and in turn calligraphy, on coins of Bengal has remained mostly unattended and unexplored as it has been neglected in research.[31] Hence it is worth researching and in the following chapters the calligraphic features of Bengal Sultānate coinage have been studied and presented.

## CALLIGRAPHIC TYPES ON BENGAL SULTĀNATE COINS

In this book a small sample of coins has been selected for drawing gray scale of the inscriptions on the original coins. The best available specimens have been selected for the purpose so that the larger part of the coins could be presented without any imagination of non available portion of the coins. From the sample of the coins **Thuluth al-me'dania, Kufic al-bangalia, Naskh, Muhaqqaq al-me'dania, tughra**

[27] A. Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture,* I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 1990, p. 31

[28] Ibid., p. 26.

[29] A. Schimmel, 1992, op.cit., pp. 50-2.

[30] A.K.M.Y., Ali, 'Five Epigraphs of Pre-Mughal Bengal: A Study of Their Contents and Calligraphic Styles', *Islamic Studies,* Vol. 25, No. 4, 1986, pp. 371-85; A.K.M.Y., Ali, *Muslim Mudra O Hastalikhan Shilpa,* first published 1989, Book Choice, Dhaka, 2008, pp. 317-38.

[31] M.H. Bhuiyan, 'Inscriptions and Calliography on Muslim Coins of Bengal (to 1576 A.D.)', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Humanities),* Vol. 52, No. 1, 2007, p. 23.

**al-bangalia** and a few other type calligraphy have been identified. **Thuluth** is one of the most impressive amongst 'six cursive styles'[32] that were raised to the status of major scripts by Ibn Muqla (full name, Abū Alī Muhammad ibn Alī bin al-Husain bin Muhammad bin Muqla)- an early 10th Century CE Persian official of the Abbasid Caliphate- Naskh, Muhaqqaq, Rayhani, Tawqi' and Riq'ah being the other five of this group. These six styles of calligraphy- known as *aqlam as-sitta,* remained exclusively in use for copyists' and calligraphers' purposes.[33] It is an Arabic calligraphic style of large cursive script and is written on the principle that one-third of each letter slopes. The meaning of the Arabic word thuluth is 'one-third'. It was largely used in medieval time's mosque decorations, sura headings in al-Qur'an, religious inscriptions, princely titles and epigraphs.[34] **Naskh** is a smaller round shaped Arabic calligraphic script, which is one of the major two Islamic calligraphy styles that co-existed since the first centuries of Islam, Kufi(c) being the other major style.[35] Variation of the Naskh includes **Thuluth, Riq'ah** and **Muhaqqaq. Kufic** is the oldest form of Arabic script, the name originates from the name of the town Kufa of Iraq, which was one of the main Islamic centers of Islamic culture during the time of the Umayyad rulers. 'Alī ibn Abi Talib, one of the four caliphs of Islam, allegedly developed the Kufic with a division of 1/6 carved and 5/6 straight lines.[36] The style emphasizes rigid and angular strokes. Other than this there was lack of common set rules of using the Kufic script and as a result 'the script differs widely between regions, ranging from very square and rigid forms to flowery and decorative ones.'[37] Kufic scripts even in its origin during Abbasid Caliphate have experienced derivations to a number of varieties.[38] Abu Hayynan at-Tauhidi, a scholar of the early eleventh century mentions twelve basic forms of Kufic inscriptions, many of them had been named after the place of their origin or the place where they were first known as had been used.[39] **Kufic al-Bangalia** is a result of those variations and has been originated in Bengal by taking derivations of Arbic origin Kufic scripts by mixing with influence of Bengal scripts or Bengal origin calligraphers. The word **Muhaqqaq** means 'accurate, well-organized, ideal script'[40] and is often used in writing *masāhif,* loose sheets of al-Qur'an. It has 'flat endings terminating in sharp points.'[41] This calligraphy style was in great use during the Mamluk era (CE 1250-516/7). **Tughra,** is originally a calligraphic monogram, seal or signature of a sultān.[42] The first tughra was seen in CE 1326[43] and later has produced a number of varieties. **Tughra al-Bangalia** is a sub-category of the main tughra type which is attributed to Bengal for its unique features. Coins of the subcontinent especially of the Mughals have seen use of **Nasta'liq** type of calligraphy while we did not find use of this type in the coins of Bengal.

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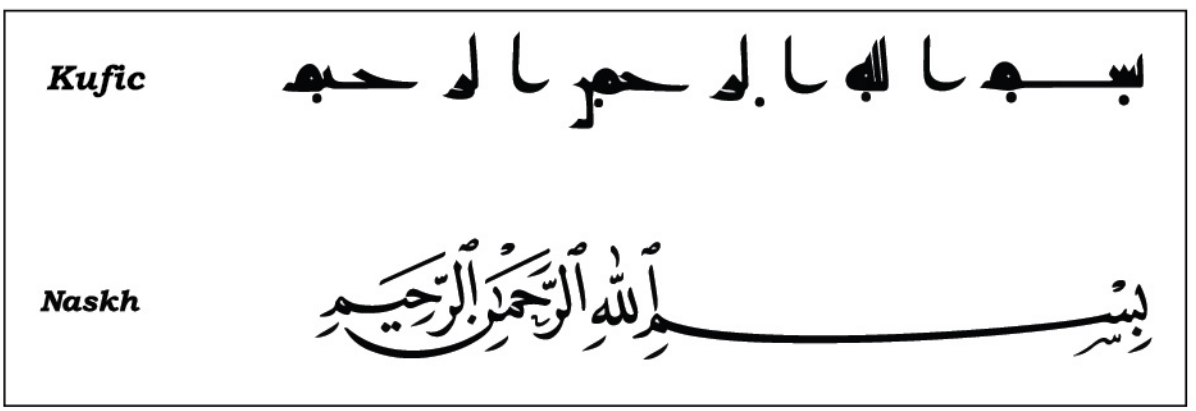
[32] Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja, op. cit., p. 27.
[33] A. Schimmel, 1990, op. cit., p. 22.
[34] Britinica.com on 31.05. 19.
[35] Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja, op. cit., p. 19.
[36] A. Schimmel, 1990, op. cit., p. 13.
[37] Wikipedia.org on 31.05.19.
[38] M. Sahragard, Qur'an and splendor of Islamic Calligraphy: Development of Iranian Calligraphy under influence of Qur'an transcribing, Conference paper, *1st International Islamic Heritage Conference,* 2015, p.50.
[39] A. Schimmel, 1990, op. cit., p. 13.
[40] Ibid., p. 23.
[41] Ibid., p. 23.
[42] Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja, op. cit., p. 23.
[43] Wikipedia.org on 31.05.19.

Here comes the influence of language and culture on calligraphy of a region that has been expressed earlier in this chapter. It has been observed by Johanna Drucker that alphabets have cultural implications and they also play a vital role as political instruments. Drucker examines the history of Roman alphabets and concludes that Roman alphabets can express history of their origins.[44] It has been well recognized that geographic, political, psychological, economic and socio-cultural factors have strong influence over linguistic environments of a nation.[45] On the other hand Aytürk shows that, alphabets, which are essential part of scripts have been largely influenced by 'technical-infrastructural' and 'political-cultural' factors.[46] Ghulam Abbas notes, 'Nastaliq's popularity extends to South Asia where the calligraphic hand is utilized by the Urdu and Kashmiri languages in India and Pakistan... the Nasta'liq script has developed an exclusive relationship with the Punjabi and Urdu languages.'[47] Brahmi or contemporary proto-Bangla scripts of Bengal of that time did not match with Nasta'liq and resulted into choosing earlier discussed other forms of scripts for calligraphy instead of Nasta'liq.

**Different Types of Calligraphic Style**

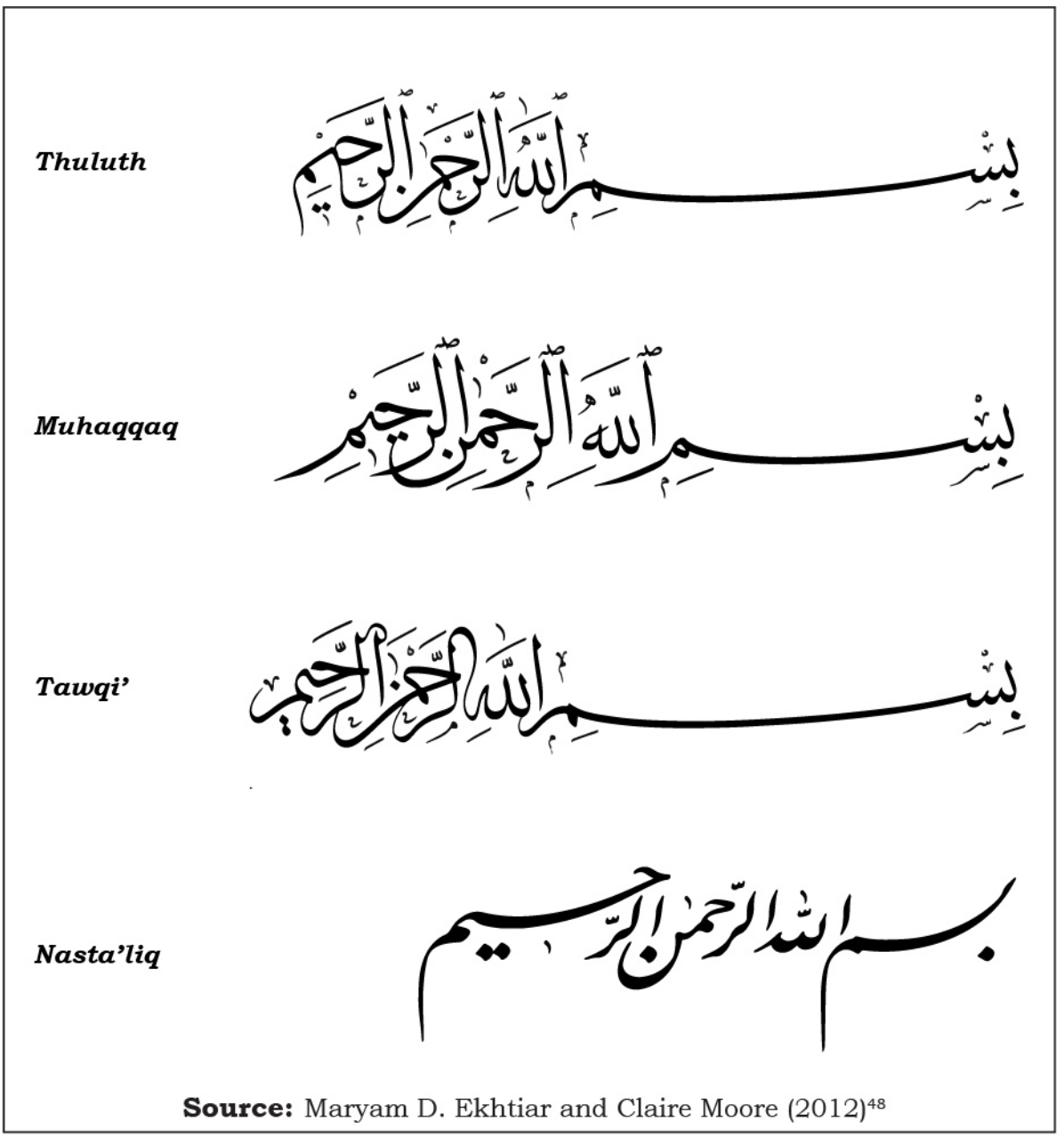



[44] Drucker, J., *The Alphabetic Labyrinth: The Letters in History and Imagination,* Thames & Hudson, New York, 1995, p. 300.

[45] For instance, see F. Coulmas, Language and Economy, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, P. Lane, 'Identities in Action: A Nexus Analysis of Identity Construction and Language Shift', Visual Communication vol. 8, no. 4, 2009, pp. 449-68; Y. Suleiman, Arabic in the Fray: Language Ideology and Cultural Politics, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2013); W. Fierman, Language Planning and National Development: The Uzbek Experience, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, 1991; M.G Smith, Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR, 1917-1953, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, 1998; S. Johnson, 'On the Origin of Linguistic Norms: Orthography, Ideology and the First Constitutional Challenge to the 1996 Reform of German', Language in Society, vol. 31, no. 4, 2002, pp. 549-76 ; and D.A. Zabarah, 'The Language That Unites and the Language That Divides Us: Why was Arabic Kept and Serbo-Croatian Abolished?', The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity, vol. 40, no. 4, 2012, pp. 545-59.

[46] I. Aytürk, 'Script Charisma in Hebrew and Turkish: A Comparative Framework for Explaining Success and Failure of Romanization', *Journal of the World History,* vol. 21, no. 1, 2010, pp, 108-10,

[47] G. Abbas, 'Nastaliq: A new form of Art in India', *Yonsei Journal of International Studies,* vol 10, no. 1, 2018, pp. 85-98.




**Source:** Maryam D. Ekhtiar and Claire Moore (2012)[48]

Understanding epigraphs starts with understanding alphabets. Here lists of Arabic and Nagari/Proto-nagari alphabets have been presented. Proto-nagari alphabets have been included here because a few Bengal Sultānate coins have used them or their origin Brahmi. Arabic alphabets take different form based on their position at the beginning or mid or the end of the word. All forms are shown next.

[48] M.D. Ekhtiar and C. Moore (ed.), op.cit., p. 58-61.

# The Arabic Alphabets

| Alphabet in transcription | Final form | Medial form | Initial form | Isolated form |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| alif | ـا | ـا | ا | ا |
| bā | ـب | ـبـ | بـ | ب |
| tā | ـت | ـتـ | تـ | ت |
| thā | ـث | ـثـ | ثـ | ث |
| jīm | ـج | ـجـ | جـ | ج |
| ḥā | ـح | ـحـ | حـ | ح |
| khā | ـخ | ـخـ | خـ | خ |
| dāl | ـد | ـد | د | د |
| dhāl | ـذ | ـذ | ذ | ذ |
| rā | ـر | ـر | ر | ر |
| za | ـز | ـز | ز | ز |
| sīn | ـس | ـسـ | سـ | س |
| shīn | ـش | ـشـ | شـ | ش |
| ṣād | ـص | ـصـ | صـ | ص |
| ḍād | ـض | ـضـ | ضـ | ض |
| ṭā | ـط | ـطـ | طـ | ط |
| ẓā | ـظ | ـظـ | ظـ | ظ |
| ayn | ـع | ـعـ | عـ | ع |
| ghayn | ـغ | ـغـ | غـ | غ |
| fā | ـف | ـفـ | فـ | ف |
| qāf | ـق | ـقـ | قـ | ق |
| kāf | ـك | ـكـ | كـ | ك |
| lām | ـل | ـلـ | لـ | ل |
| mīm | ـم | ـمـ | مـ | م |
| nūn | ـن | ـنـ | نـ | ن |
| hā | ـه/ـة | ـهـ | هـ | ه |
| wāw | ـو | ـو | و | و |
| yā | ـي | ـيـ | يـ | ي |

## Arabic Numerals

| **Roman** | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Arabic** | ٠ | ١ | ٢ | ٣ | ٤/۴ | ٥ | ٦ | ٧ | ٨ | ٩ |

On coins of Bengal Sultānate dates are inscribed both in numerals and alphabets. In the following table Arabic alphabetic numerals and their pronunciations are listed.

## Alphabetic Numerals

| Numerals | Arabic Alphabetic | Pronunciation |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | واحد | *wa'hid* |
| **2** | اثنان | *ithnān* |
| **3** | ثلاثه | *thalāthah* |
| **4** | أربعه | *arb'ah* |
| **5** | خمسه | *khamsah* |
| **6** | سته | *sittah* |
| **7** | سبعه | *sab'ah* |
| **8** | ثمنيه | *thamanyah* |
| **9** | تسعه | *tis'ah* |
| **10** | عشره | *'ashrah* |
| **11** | أحدعشر | *ahad 'ashrah* |
| **12** | اثناعشر | *ithnā 'ashrah* |
| **13** | ثلاثه عشر | *thalāthah 'ashrah* |
| **14** | أربعه عشر | *arba'ah 'ashrah* |
| **15** | خمسه عشر | *khamsah 'ashrah* |
| **16** | سته عشر | *sittah 'ashrah* |
| **17** | سبعه عشر | *sab'ah 'ashrah* |
| **18** | ثمنيه عشر | *thamanyah 'ashrah* |
| **19** | تسعه عشر | *tis'ah 'ashrah* |
| **20** | عشرون | *'ashrūn* |
| **30** | ثلاثون | *thalāthūn* |

| Numerals | Arabic Alphabetic | Pronunciation |
|---|---|---|
| **40** | أربعون | *arba'ūn* |
| **50** | خمسون | *khamsūn* |
| **60** | ستون | *sittūn* |
| **70** | سبعون | *sab'ūn* |
| **80** | ثمانون | *thamānūn* |
| **90** | تسعون | *tis'ūn* |
| **100** | مائه | *māyah* |
| **200** | مائتين | *māyatīn* |
| **300** | ثلاثمائه | *thalāthamāyah* |
| **400** | أربعه مائه | *arba'ah māyah* |
| **500** | خمس مائه | *khamsa māyah* |
| **600** | ستمائه | *sittamāyah* |
| **700** | سبعمائه | *sab'amāyah* |
| **800** | ثمن مائه | *thamanamāyah* |
| **900** | تسعمائه | *tis'amāyah* |

For example, though weird a bit, date seven hundred eighty nine may be written on Bengal Sultānate coins as follows,

| | |
|---|---|
| تسعه و ثمانون و سبعمائه | From right to left 'nine (تسعه) and (و) eighty (ثمانون) and (و) seven hundred (سبعمائه)' |

## LETTERS IN PROTO-NAGARI LANGUAGE

Proto-nagari is part of Brahmi family of scripts which originates from ancient India, Tibet and Southeast Asia. It was derived from Gupta script mainly at around eighth century CE. Proto-bangla was developed in Bengal region from Proto-nagari and subsequently took form of present time *Bangla*.[49] These Proto-nagari alphabets have been reproduced here for comparing the contemporary *Bangla* inscriptions on coins of Danuja Marddana Deva and Mahendra Deva and also Nagari inscriptions on coins of Sher Shāhi and Muhammad Shāhi dynasty.

[49] M.S. Islam and M.M. Hossain, op. cit., pp. 167-8.

## Swar Barna

| Proto-nagari | Roman | Proto-nagari | Roman |
|---|---|---|---|
| अ | a | आ | ā |
| इ | i | ई | ī |
| उ | u | ऊ | ū |
| ऋ | ṛ | ॠ | ṝ |
| ऌ | ḷ | ॡ | ḹ |
| ए | e | ऐ | ai |
| ओ | o | औ | au |

Source: Islam and Hossain (2019)[50]

## Byanjan Barna

| Proto-nagari | Roman | Proto-nagari | Roman |
|---|---|---|---|
| क | ka | द | da |
| ख | kha | ध | dha |
| ग | ga | न | na |
| घ | gha | प | pa |
| ङ | ṅa | फ | pha |
| च | ca | ब | ba |
| छ | cha | भ | bha |
| ज | ja | म | ma |
| झ | jha | य | ya |
| ञ | ña | र | ra |
| ट | ṭa | ल ळ | la |
| ठ | ṭha | व | va |
| ड | ḍa | श | śa |
| ढ | ḍha | स | sa |
| ण | ṇa | ष | ṣa |
| त | ta | ह | ha |
| थ | tha | | |

Source: Islam and Hossain (2019)[51]

[50] M.S. Islam and M.M. Hossain, op. cit., p. 167
[51] Ibid., p. 167-8.

CHAPTER 4

# GOVERNOR PERIOD

Medieval period of Bengal starts from Khalji dynasty, which is the first Muslim dynasty in Bengal[1]. At the time of invasion of Muslims in India, Bihar was still under Pala, while Bengal was under Sena dynasty.[2] During Lakhshman Sena's reign Bengal was invaded by Mohammad Bakhtiyar Khalji[3]. Khalji rulers and governors of Delhi Sultānates ruled Bengal from CE 1203 to 1281. Then independent Balban dynasty came, which was in power from CE 1281 to 1328.[4] Nāsir al-Dīn Bughra Khan (CE 1282-9), Rukn al-Dīn Kaikāūs (CE 1290-300), Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (CE 1300-22) and his son Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh (CE 1317-28) were the independent rulers under this dynasty. After Bahādur Shāh, Bengal came under Tughlaq of Sultānate of Delhi.

| Serial No. | Names of the Coin Issuing Authority | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 1 | Ikhtiyar al-Dīn Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji INO Muhammad bin Sām | 600-2 | 1203-6 |
| 2 | Rukn al-Dīn 'Alī Mardān | 607-9/10 | 1210-2/3 |
| 3 | Shams al- Dīn Īltutmish (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 4 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iwad Khalji (also with 'Alī Sher Burhan) | 610-24 | 1213-27 |
| 5 | Daulat Shāh bin Maudūd (Joint Issue) | 627 | 1230 |
| 6 | Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 7 | Jalalat al-Dīn Radiyya (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 8 | Mu'izz al-Dīn Bahrām (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 9 | 'Alā al-Dīn Masūd (Sultān of Delhi) | | |

[1] According to H. Blochmann, op. cit., p. 3, before the conquest of Bengal by Bakhtyar Kholji in 1203 AD, Bengal was divided into three administrative districts such as, (1) Radha, the country west of the Hugli and south of the Ganges; (2) Bagdi, the delta of the Ganges; (3) Banga, the country to the east of, and beyond, the delta; (4) Barendra, the country to the north of the Padma and between the Karataya and the Mahananda rivers; and (5) Mithila, the country west of the Mahananda.

[2] R.S. Chaurasia, *History of Ancient India: Earliest times to 1000 CE,* Atlantic Publications, Delhi, 2002, p. 199.

[3] Ibid., p. 200; Sarkar, S. J. (ed.), *'The History of Bengal',* Vol II, The University of Dacca, 1948, p. 4.

[4] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates,* Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2001, pp. 139-40. Authors have provided a comprehensive list of rulers of Bengal Sultānate based on numismatic evidences.

| Serial No. | Names of the Coin Issuing Authority | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 10 | Qamar al-Dīn Tamar Khan Kiran (Anonymous) | 642-4 | 1244-6 |
| 11 | Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 12 | Mughith al-Dīn Yūzbak | 651-5 | 1253-7 |
| 13 | Ghiyāth al- Dīn Balban (Sultān of Delhi) | | |
| 14 | Muiz al-Dīn Tughril | 674-80 | 1275-81 |
| 15 | Jalāl al-Dīn Mahmūd | 686-7 | 1287-8 |
| 16 | Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd (Bughra Khan,s/o Balban) | 680-8 | 1282-9 |
| 17 | Rukn al-Dīn Kaikāūs (s/o Bughra Khan) | 689-700 | 1290-300 |
| 18 | Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh | 700-22 | 1300-22 |
| 19 | Shihab al-Dīn Bugda Shāh (s/o Fīrūz Shāh) | 717-8 | 1317-8 |
| 20 | Jalāl al-Dīn Kurban/Guzban Shāh | 719 | 1319 |
| 21 | Shams al-Dīn Daulat Shāh | nd | nd |
| 22 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh (s/o Fīrūz Shāh) | 717-28 | 1317-28 |
| 23 | Nāsir al-Dīn Ibrahim Shāh (s/o Fīrūz; Joint Issue) | 724-7 | 1324-7 |
| 24 | Muhammad bin Tughluq (Sultān of Delhi) | | |

# BAKHTIYAR KHALJI INO MUHAMMAD BIN SĀM

## (AH 600-2/CE 1203-6)

The date of Bakhtiyar Khalji's invasion in Gaur or Gauda has been subject to speculation because of lack of contemporary chronicles that have remarks about the event.[5] The earliest description about the event of Bakhtiyar's expedition in Nūdyā is found in Tabakat-i-Nasiri where it has been mentioned that sometimes in CE 1203-4 Bakhtiyar invaded the Royal city of Nūdyā after demolishing neighboring Buddhist monastaries in Bihar.[6] Overwhelmed at this event 'the Hindu monarch hastily departed through a back door and fled' towards the 'forested hinterland of eastern Bengal'.[7]

Till recently Nūdyā was identified somewhere in the Nadia district of West Bengal, India, while Syed Ejaz Hussain brings in his discussion with reference of recent research works that more probable location of Nūdyā is Naudah or Nudiah which is a village identified about 2-3 miles north-east of the Rohanpur railway station in Western Greater Rajshahi district of Bangladesh that is 20 miles south-east of Gaur-Lakhnautī in Malda of West Bengal.[8] He also asserts that several mounds, archaeological artifacts and Hindu relics are found from this place. As mounds are very extensive, that fit to be treated as city and he believes that it was the actual Nūdyā of Lakshman Sena. Images of one such surviving mounds, Shāh Buruj, at Naudah show that it is definitely remain of an abandoned construction, not very large though. Archaeological excavation on this site may reveal more of it.

**Shāh Buruj at Naudah**

**Scattered Bricks on Shāh Buruj**

Syed Ejaz Hussain argues upon a coin of *Gauda vijayae* type, that bears inscription *fi-al-muntasif Rabi'-ul-awwal sanh sab'a wa sab'amayah,* which he translates as '15 Ramadān AH 601 or 6 May CE 1205' as he translates muntasif as 'half or middle'. To remain on the safer side we can say based on his translation that Bakhtiyar conquered Gauda on a day that belongs to mid of month of Ramadān in AH 601, which fall in May of CE 1205.[9]

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[5] S.E. Hussain, *The Bengal Sultanate: Politics, Economy and Coins (AD 1205-1576),* Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2003, p. 10.

[6] R.M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760,* University of California Press, California, 1993, p. xxi.

[7] Ibid., p. xxi.

[8] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 8.

[9] P.L. Gupta, 'On the Date of the Horseman Type Coin of Muhammed Bin Sam', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India (JNSI),* Vol. XXXVIII, 1976, p. 81 without mentioning specific date concludes that the coin was issued during the month of Ramadan in the year AH 601.

**B-01-01**

## Gold Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh al Medania and Thuluth*

This coin was issued under the authority of Bakhtiyar Khalji after the victory of his forces over Sena dynasty. This coin bears the inscription *Gauda vijayae* on the margin of the obverse. This particular specimen bears numismatic importance in that it evidences additional phrases *nāsir amīr al mu'minīn* after standard legend.

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

Horseman in the center and date on the margin with *Gauda vijayae*

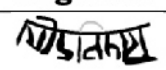
Reverse

Legend in the field,
*al-sultān al-mu'azzam mu'izz (al-dun)yā wa'l dīn abū al-muẓaffar muhammad bin sā(m) nāsir amīr al-mū'(minīn)*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

The legend section on the margin Gauda vijayae is garbled on this particular specimen. Based on other coins this section has been fine tuned as in fig. 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Fine Tuned Gauda vijayae Legend**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | গৌড় বিজয় | *gauda vijayae* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | المعظم | *al-mu'azzam* |
| 3 | | معز | *mu'izz* |
| 4 | | (الدن)ي | *(al-dun)yā* |
| 5 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 6 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 7 | | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 8 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 9 | | بن | *bin* |
| 10 | | سا(م) | *sā(m)* |
| 11 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 12 | | امير | *amīr* |
| 13 | | المو(منين) | *al-mū'(minīn)* |

# RUKN AL-DĪN ʻALĪ MARDĀN

## (AH 607-9/CE 1210-2)

Rukn al-Dīn ʻAlī Mardān was a General in the army of Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji. In one expedition of Bakhtiyar, ʻAlī Mardān killed Bakhtiyar Khalji. Later he was captured and imprisoned in Barsala[10] by Muhammad Shiran Khalji. ʻAlī Mardān managed to escape from the prison by gaining favor of the prison-in-charge whose name was Bābā Haji Isfahani, who was popular as *Bābā* in name.[11] Later he defeated army of Shiran Khalji and gained favor of Delhi ruler Qutb al-Dīn Aibak to become governor of Bengal in AH 607. On the news of death of Aibak in the same year (AH 607/CE 1210) and knowing over the conflict at Delhi regarding sultānate, ʻAlī Mardān declared himself as the first independent sultān of Bengal. After accession to sultānate, ʻAlī Mardān issued silver and gold tankas in his name. An interesting feature of the first issue of his coins bearing date AH 607 is a short legend *Bābā* on the obverse behind the horse rider. This short legend probably is inscribed by the issuer of the coin for showing respect for the earlier mentioned prison-in-charge Bābā Haji Isfahani who helped him to escape from the prison.[12]

### Coin B-02-01

**Silver Tanka**[13]

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Naskh*

[10] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 18.

[11] Minhaj al-Dīn, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* trans. By Major H.G. Raverty, 1881, Reprinted, New Helhi, 1970, p. 157.

[12] Syed Ejaz Hussain, op. cit., p. 20.; S. M. Iftekhar Alam, An Unpublished Coin of ʻAli Mardan Khalji, *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* Vol. 195, 2008, pp. 23-4.

[13] Image received from S.M. Iftekhar Alam.

## Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin

Obverse

Horseman to left holding torch or mace. *Bābā* legend behind the horseman. Shahāda on the margin. Other part of the legend on the margin is not read.

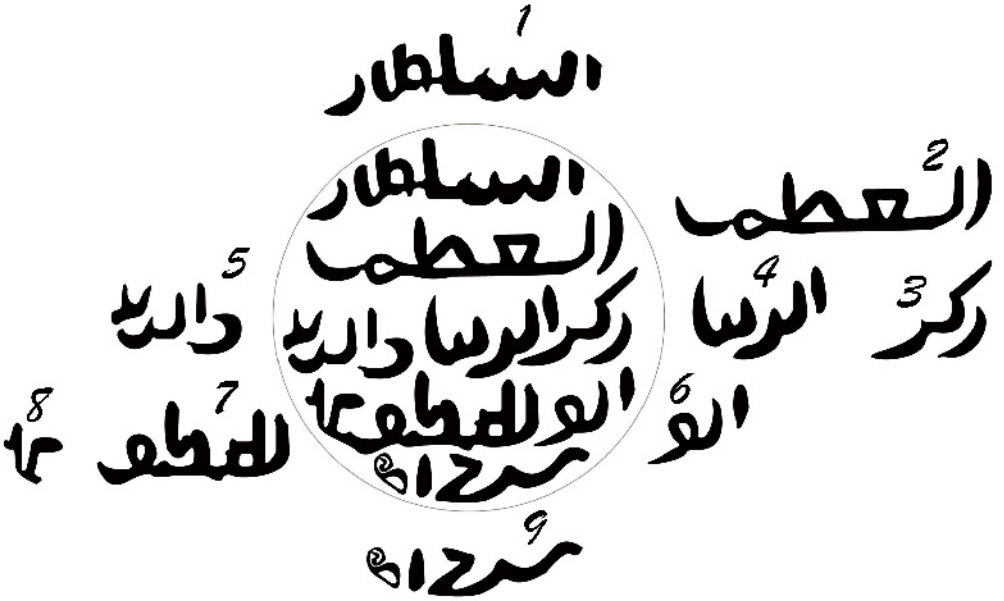
Reverse

Legend in the field,
*al-sultān al-mu'azzam rukn al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar 'alī mardān*

## Epigraphic Analysis of Obverse

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | بابا | بابا | *bābā* |
| 2 | لا اله الا الله | لااله الاالله | *lā ilaha illā allāh* |
| 3 | محمد رسول الله | محمدرسول الله | *muhammad rasūl allāh* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | المعظم | المعظم | *al- mu'azzam* |
| 3 | ركن | ركن | *rukn* |
| 4 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | والدين | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 6 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 7 | المظفر | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 8 | علي | علي | *'alī* |
| 9 | مردان | مردان | *mardān* |

# GHIYĀTH AL-DĪN 'IWAD

## (AH 610-24/CE 1213-27)

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iwad was a governor of Delhi sultānate at Bengal. Initially he issued coins in the name of Delhi ruler Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish. There are coins issued in the name of Iltutmish dated AH 614-6.[14] As Bengal was far from Delhi, he declared himself as independent sultān of Bengal sometimes when he felt secured of doing so. First date of coins, which are evidences of such declaration, is AH 616.[15] This move of Iwad was not immediately challenged, as we see coins of Iwad as independent sultān on different dates, latest of which is AH 621.[16] Iwad's move was challenged by Delhi sultān Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish during AH 620 and from coins it is evident that Iwad had to accept submission to Delhi sultān. Then Iwad had to show his submission by issuing coins in the name of Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish again in AH 622.[17]

## Coin B-04-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* and *Thuluth.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

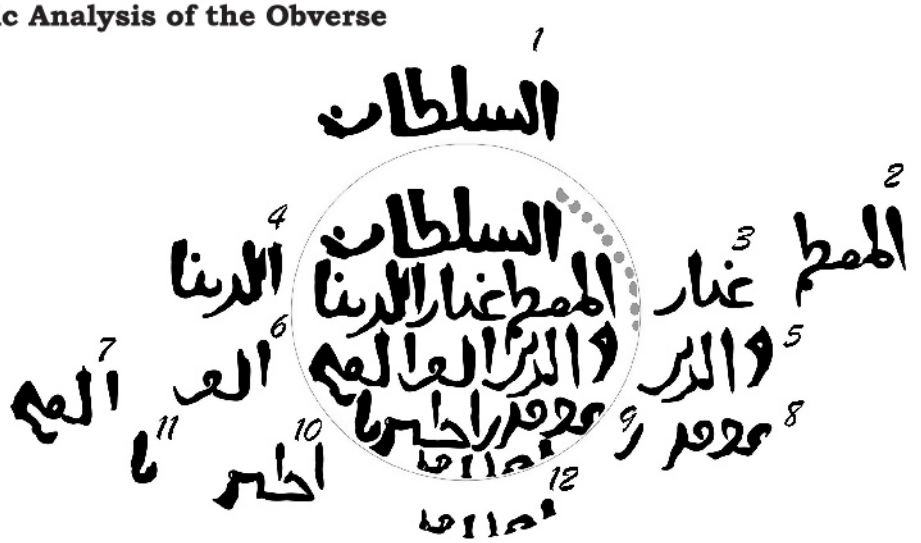
Legend on the field,
*al-sultān al-mu'azzam ghiyāth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l fath 'iwad bin al-husain nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn*

[14] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B11-18, pp.147-8.
[15] Ibid., Coin ref. B25-28, p. 149.
[16] Ibid., Coin ref. B29-33, p. 150.
[17] Ibid., Coin ref. B37-40, p. 151.

Reverse

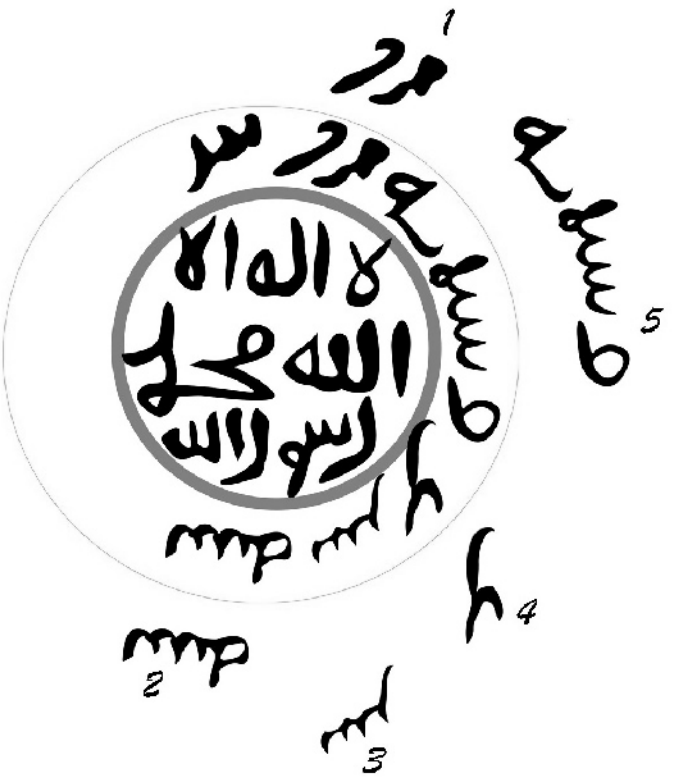
Shahāda in the central field, date and mint on the margin.
Date: 616
Mint not readable.

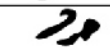
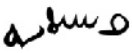
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | المعظم | المعظم | *al-mu'a̲z̲z̲am* |
| 3 | غیاث | غياث | *ghiyāth* |
| 4 | الدنیا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | والدین | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 6 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 7 | الفتح | الفتح | *al-fath* |
| 8 | عوض | عوض | *'iwad* |
| 9 | بن | بن | *bin* |
| 10 | الحسین | الحسين | *al-husain* |
| 11 | ناصر | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 12 | امیر المومنین | امير المومنين | *amīr al-mu'minīn* (?; not readable) |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 2 | | سنه | date |
| 3 | | سته | six |
| 4 | | عسره | ten |
| 5 |  | وستمائه | *wa sittamāyah* (and six hundred) |

## *'Iwad in the name of Iltutmish*

### Coin B-03-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** On the obverse *Nasskh* and *Thuluth,* while on the reverse *Thuluth* and *Nagari.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

Horseman facing left holding a mace. On the margin Shahāda.

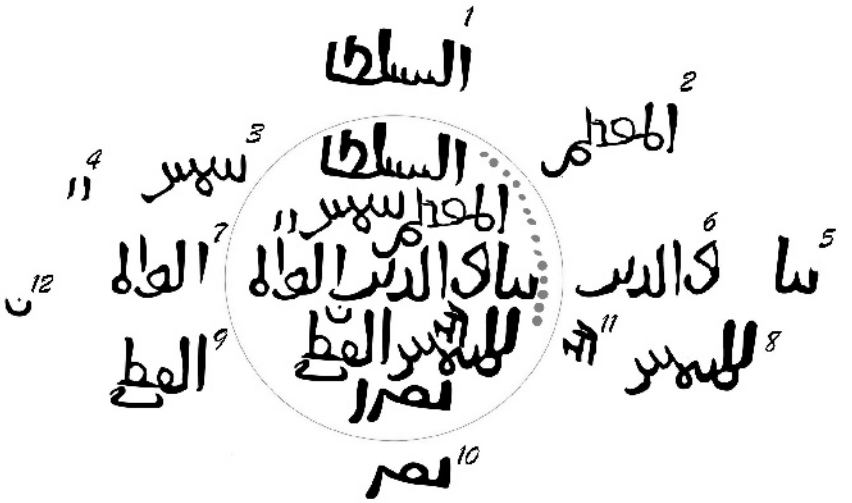
Reverse

*al-sultān al-mu'a̲zz̲am shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l mu̲z̲affar iltutmish al-qutbī nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | محمد | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 2 | رسول | رسو(ل) | *rasū(l)* |
| 3 | الله | الله | *allāh* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | المعظم | المعظم | *al-mu'azzam* |
| 3 | شمس | شمس | *shams* |
| 4 & 5 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 6 | والدين | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 7 | ابو المظفر | ابو المظفر | *abū al-muẓaffar* |
| 8 | التتمش | التتمش | *iltutmish* |
| 9 | القطبي | القطبي | *al-qutbī* |
| 10 | ناصر | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 11 | श्री | श्री | *śrī* |
| 12 | ॐ | ॐ | *omm* |

ن is placed parallel to श्री which may indicate that ن is not Arabic noon, instead devanagari ॐ which expresses a high position of the sultān, as *śrī* is written above the name Iltutmish and ॐ is written above *al-qutbī* meaning paramagnetic.

## Coin B-03-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* on the obverse, while *Thuluth* and *Naskh* on the reverse.

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

Legend in the field,
*al-sultān al-mu'azzam shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar iltutmish al-sultānī yamīn khalīfat allāh nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn*

Reverse

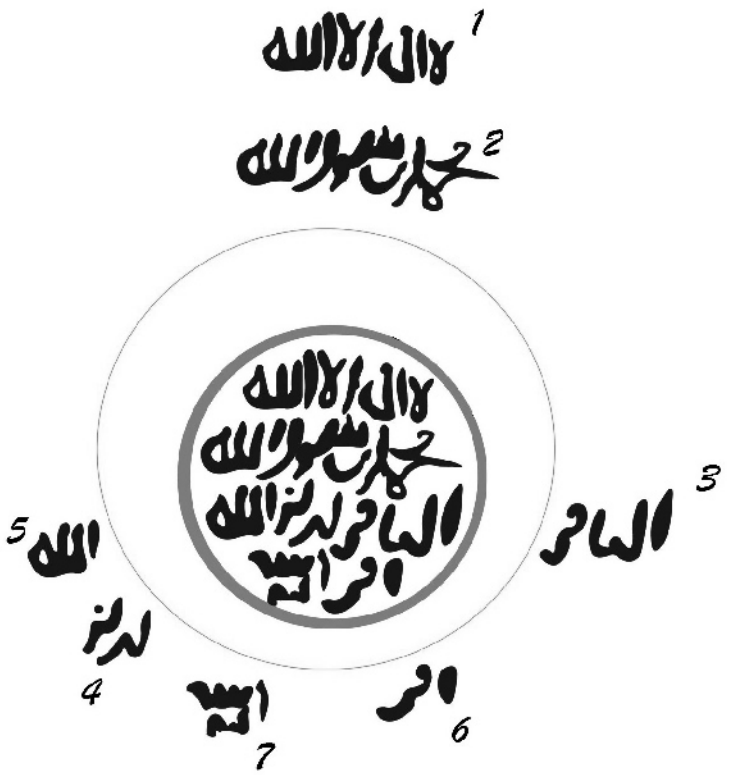
Legend in the central field,
shahāda at the top two lines followed by,
*al-nāsir lī dīn allāh amīr al-mū'minīn*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

As very crude, it is difficult to read the inscription form the coin.

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | شمس | *shams* |
| 3 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 4 | | والدين | *w/a'l dīn* |
| 5 | | (ابو)المظفر | *(abū) al-muẓaffar* |
| 6 | | التتمش | *iltutmish* |
| 7 | | السلطانى | *al- sultānī* |
| 8 | | يمين | *yamīn* |
| 9 | | خليفه | *khalīfat* |
| 10 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 11 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 12 | | امير | *amīr* |
| 13&14 | | المومنين | *al-mu'minīn* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | لااله الاالله | *lā ilaha illā allāh* |
| 2 | | محمدرسول الله | *muhammad rasūl allāh* |
| 3 |  | ال ناصر | *al- nāsir* |
| 4 | | لدين | *lī dīn* |
| 5 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 6 | | امير | *amīr* |
| 7 | | المومنين | *al-mū'minīn* |

## *'Iwad with 'Alī Sher Burhan*

## Coin B-04-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* and *Thuluth*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

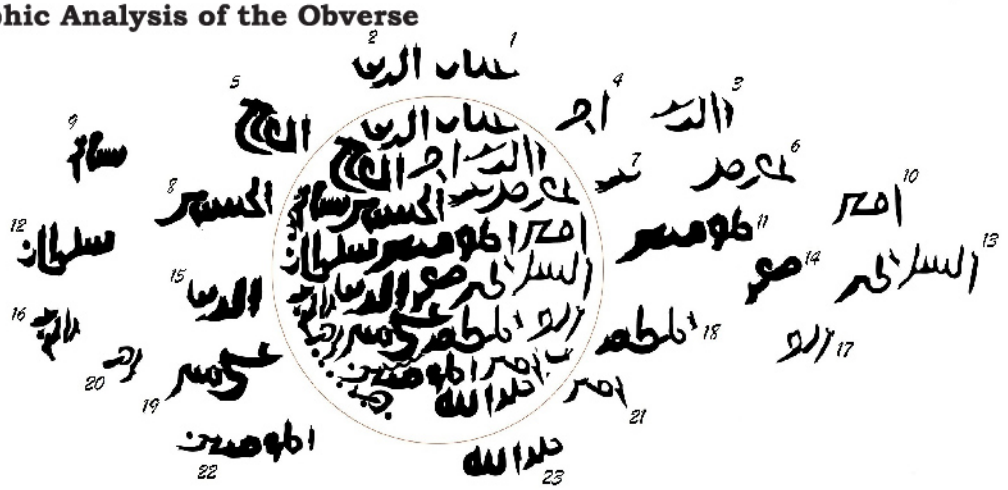
Obverse

Legend in the field,
*ghiyāth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l fath 'iwad bin al-husain nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn sultān al-sultān mu'izz al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar 'alī sher burhan amīr al-mū'minīn khallada allāh*

Reverse

Legend in the central field,
shahāda at the top two lines followed by,
*al-nāsir lī dīn allāh amīr al-mū'minīn*

## Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | غياث | غياث | *ghiyāth* |
| 2 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 3 | والدين | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 4 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 5 | الفاتح | الفاتح | *al-fāth* |
| 6 | عوض | عوض | *'iwad* |
| 7 | بن | بن | *bin* |
| 8 | الحسين | الحسين | *al-husain* |
| 9 | ناصر | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 10 | امير | امير | *amīr* |
| 11 | المومنين | المومنين | *al-mu'minīn* |
| 12 | سلطان | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 13 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 14 | معز | معز | *mu'izz* |
| 15 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 16 | والدين | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 17 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 18 | المظفر | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 19 | علي شير | علي شير | *'alī sher* |
| 20 | برهن | برهن | *burhan* |
| 21 | امير | امير | *amīr* |
| 22 | المومنين | المومنين | *al-mu'minīn* |
| 23 | خلد الله | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |

# JALALAT AL-DĪN RADIYYA

Radiyya bint Iltutmish is popularly known as Radiyya sultāna who was an empress of the Delhi sultānate from AH 634 to 637 (CE 1236-40). She was the first sovereign female ruler in known Islamic and Indian history. Her Bengal subordinates issued coins from Lakhnautī in her name bearing *fi'ahd* legend with salutation to the Caliph Mustansir. In this section one such coin has been analyzed.

## Coin B-07-01

### Silver Tanka

**Obverse:** *al-sultān al-a'ẕam jalālat al-dunyā wa'l dīn malikah ibnat iltutmish al-sultān nasrat amīr al-mū'minīn*

**Reverse:** *fī 'ahd al-imām al-mustansir amīr al-mu'minīn*

**Calligraphic Style:** *Bihari* and *Kufic al-Bangalia*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | الاعظم | *al-aʿẓam* |
| 3 | | جلالة | *jalālat* |
| 4 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | | والدين | *waʾl dīn* |
| 6 | | ملكه | *malikah* |
| 7 | | ابنت | *ibnat* |
| 8 | | التتمش | *iltutmish* |
| 9 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 10 | | نصرة | *nasrat* |
| 11 | | امير | *amīr* |
| 12 | | المومنين | *al-mūʾminīn* |

# NĀSIR AL-DĪN MAHMŪD SHĀH

Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (AH 644-64/ CE 1246-66) was sultān of Delhi. His governors in Bengal issued coins in the name of the sultān of Delhi from local mints such as Lakhnautī.

## Coin B-11-01

### Silver Tanka

**Obverse:** *al-sultān al-aʿẓam nāsir al-dunyā waʾl dīn abū al-muẓaffar mahmūd al-sultān*

**Reverse:** *fī ʿahd al-imām al-mustaʿsim amīr al-mūʾminīn, Date: 647*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ناصر | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 2 | محمود | محمود | *mahmūd* |

# MUGHĪTH AL-DĪN YŪZBAK

## (AH 651-5/CE 1253-7)

Goron and Goenka call this governor who attempted to be independent sultān of Bengal as 'a habitual rebel'.[18] He was appointed as governor of Bengal by Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd (AH 644-64), sultān of Delhi, sometimes in the year AH 640. But in the year AH 651 he issued coin in joint name with his original master Mahmūd where he mentioned Mahmūd as *al-sultān al-a'ẕam* (supreme sultān) and mentioning himself as *fi naubat al-abd yozbak al-sultāni* (during the term/governorship of the servant of the sultān yūzbak). From AH 652 Yūzbak issued coin in his own name calling himself as *al-sultān al-a'zam* (supreme sultān).[19] His coins declaring himself as sultān are issued from Nudiya and Lakhnautī mint.[20]

**Coin B-12-01**

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic mashriqi, Muhaqqaq* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

**Obverse**

Legend in the central field,
*al-sultān al-a'ẕam mughīth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-muẕaffar yūzbak al-sultān*

**Reverse**

Legend in the central field,
*fī 'ahd al-imām al-musta'sim amīr al-mū'minīn*

On the margin,
*hazā al-zarb lakhnautī min kharāz azmardan wa nūdyā fī ramadān sanah thalathah wa khamsīn wa sittamiyah* (Date: 653)

[18] Ibid., p. 156.
[19] Ibid., B75-76, P. 157.
[20] Ibid., Coin ref. B75-76, p. 157.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | الاعظم | الاعظم | *al-aʿẕam* |
| 3 | مغيث | مغيث | *mughīth* |
| 4 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | والدين | والدين | *waʾl dīn* |
| 6 | ابو المظفر | ابو المظفر | *abū al-muẕaffar* |
| 7 | يوزبك | يوزبك | *yūzbak* |
| 8 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Central Legend of Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | فی عهد | *fī ‘ahd* |
| 2 | | الامام | *al-imām* |
| 3 | | المنعصم | *al-musta’sim* |
| 4 | | امیر | *amīr* |
| 5 | | المومنین | *al-mū’minīn* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Margin Legend of Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | هذا | هذا | *hazā* |
| 2 | الضرب | الضرب | *al-zarb* |
| 3 | لكنوتى | لكنوتى | *lakhnautī* |
| 4 | خراج | منخراج | *min kharāz* |
| 5 | ازمردن | ازمردن | *azmardan* |
| 6 | ونوديا | ونوديا | *wa nūdyā* |
| 7 | فى رمضان | فى رمضان | *fī ramadān* |
| 8 | سنه | سنه | *sanah* |
| 9 | ثلثه | ثلثه | *thalathah* (three) |
| 10 | وخمسين | وخمسين | *wa khamsīn* (and fifty) |
| 11 | وستماية | وستماية | *wa sittamiyah* (and six hundred) |

# GHIYĀTH AL-DĪN BALBAN

Mughīth al-Dīn Yūzbak was killed by Koch Hajo army on an expedition to Kamrup in the year AH 655.[21] Afterwards, Bengal was ruled by Izz al-Dīn Yūzbaki (AH 657) and Taj al-Dīn Arslan Khan (AH 657-63). But no coins of these rulers have been identified. Arslan Khan was succeeded by his son Tatar Khan in AH 663. According to *Tarikh-i-Fīrūzshahi,*[22] Tatar Khan explicitly acknowledged the authority of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban who ascended the throne of Delhi Sultānate in AH 664/AD 1266.[23] Therefore, after death of Yūzbak in the year AH 655, Bengal could not gain independence for a long time.

## Coin B-13-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth al-me'dania, kufic al-bangalia* and *Naskh.*

This coin from Lakhnautī mint was issued in the name of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban of Delhi Sultānate that bears date AH 665, which falls in the reign of Tatar Khan who ruled Bengal as governor under authority of Balban.[24] As it has been mentioned earlier that, Tatar Khan explicitly acknowledged the authority of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban,[25] this coin approves that statement of *Tarikh-i-Fīrūz Shāhi* as a reference, at least for the year AH 665.

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[21] M.M. Ali, op. cit., pp.97-8.

[22] Z. Barani, *Tarikh i Fīrūz Shahi,* (B.I. series), Calcutta, 1862, p. 53 in M.M. Ali, op. cit., p. 99).

[23] M.S. Islam, 'A Coin of Tatar Khan of Bengal INO Ghiyāth al Dīn Balban of Delhi Sultānate', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* no. 226, 2016, pp. 20-1. In this paper a coin from Lakhnautī mint issued in the name of Ghiyāth al Dīn Balban of Delhi Sultānate has been presented that clearly shows date 665AH that falls in the reign of Tatar Khan who ruled Bengal as governor under authority of Balban.

[24] Ibid.; earlier the date was mentioned by S.E. Hussain, *The Bengal Sultanate: Politics, Economy and Coins (AD 1205-1576),* Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2003, p. 50.

[25] D.D. Barani, *Tarikh i Fīrūz Shahi,* text ed. Maulavi Sayyed Ahmad Khan Sahib, Bib. Indica, Calcutta, 1862. Eng. tr. in Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 53.

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*al-sultān al-a'ẕam ghiyāth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẕaffar balban al-sultān*
On the margin,
*zarb hazihi al fiddat bī hadrat Lakhnautī*
Date: six hundred and sixty five

Reverse

Legend in the central field,
*al-imām amīr al-musta'sim al-mu'mīnin*
On the margin
*zarb hazihi al fiddat bī hadrat lakhnautī*
Date: six hundred and sixty five

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطار | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | الاعظم | الاعظم | *al-aʿẓam* |
| 3 | غيار | غياث | *ghiyāth* |
| 4 | الدنى | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | والدر | والدين | *waʾl dīn* |
| 6 | ابوالمظفر | ابوالمظفر | *abūʾl muẓaffar* |
| 7 | بلبن | بلبن | *balban* |
| 8 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 9 | ضرت | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 10 | هذه الفضه | هذه الفضة | *hazihi al fiddat* |
| 11 | بحضره | بحضرة | *bī hadrat* |
| 12 | لكنوتى | لكنوتى | *lakhnautī* |
| 13 | وستين وستمائة | وستين(و)ستمائة | *wa sittin (wa) sittimainat* (and sixty and six hundred) |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | الامام | الامام | *al-imām* |
| 2 | امیر | امیر | *amīr* |
| 3 | المنتصم | المنتصم | *al-musta'sim* |
| 4 | المومنین | المومنین | *al-mu'minīn* |
| 5 | ضرب | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 6 | هذه | هذه | *hazihi* |
| 7 | الفضه | الفضة | *al fiddat* |
| 8 | بحضره | بحضرة | *bī hadrat* |
| 9 | لکنوتی | لکنوتی | *Lakhnautī* |
| 10 | فی سنه | فی سنة | *fe sanah* (date) |
| 11 | خمسه | خمسه | *khamsah* (five) |
| 12 | وستین | وستین | *wa sittin* (and sixty) |
| 13 | وستمایه | وستمایة | *wa sittimainat* (and six hundred) |

Muizz al-Dīn Tughril (AH 674-80 as sultān) was appointed as governor of Bengal in the year AH 667.[26] From historical records it is evident that Tughril was an able ruler who successfully brought the Sena dynasty rule in the eastern Bengal to an end and comprehensively expanded the boundaries of the area under Muslim control in the east and the south-west.[27] He was also able to extend his 'political and diplomatic influence' over neighboring kingdom Tripura (Tippera) by helping Ratna Fa (Ratna Manikkya) in out-throwing his brother Raja Fa and placing Ratna Fa on the throne.
Tughril declared independence in AH 674/CE 1277 hearing news of death of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban, sultān of Delhi.[28] He assumed the title *al-sultān al-a'zam mu'izz al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar tughril al-sultān* and issued coins in his own name with that title.[29] But the news he heard about Balban's death was not correct. Later, Balban wanted to convince Tughril back under his loyalty by a 'peaceful negotiations and persuasion',[30] while that effort of Balban failed. Failing in that attempt Balban decided to send troops in Bengal against Tughril and did it in AH 676/AD 1278[31] and again in the very next year, which both failed. Then Balban decided to march by himself with a large army of about 3,00,000 men, which pushed Tughril to a fierce defeat. Balban brutally killed Tughril and Tughril's officers. Later governors issued coins from Lakhnautī in the name of Balban.[32]

[26] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 158.
[27] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p.99-102.
[28] Ibid., p. 100.
[29] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B82, p. 158.
[30] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p.101.
[31] Ibid., 101.
[32] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., pp. 50-1.

# RUKN AL-DĪN KAIKĀŪS

## (AH 689-700/CE 1290-1300)

Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Bughra Shāh (680-8 AH), who was son of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban, was appointed as governor of Bengal who out-threw Jalāl al-Dīn Mahmūd and later declared independence of Bengal. This independence was continued till AH 728 though under a number of rulers. Mahmūd was succeeded by his son Rukn al-Dīn Kaikāūs (AH 689-700). It is evident from coins of Kaikāūs that he called himself as sultān bin sultān bin sultān. Therefore, he stressed that he was son of Bughra khan, the earlier sultān of Bengal and grandson of Balban, the earlier sultān of Delhi.

### Coin B-17-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

**Obverse**

Legend in the central field,
*al-sultān al-a'ẓam rukn al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-muẓaffar kaikāūs sultān bin al-sultān bin sultān*

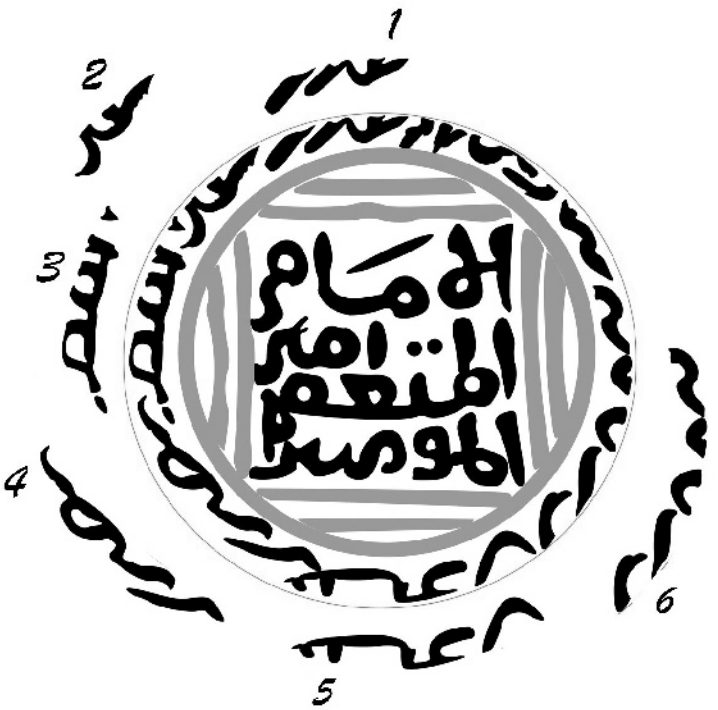
**Reverse**

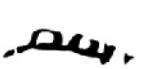
Legend in the central field,
*al-imām al-musta'sim amīr al-mu'minīn*
Mint: Hadarat Lakhnautī
From land tax of Banga
Date not read

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | الاعظم | الاعظم | *al-aʿẓam* |
| 3 | ركن | ركن | *rukn* |
| 4 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | والدين | والدين | *waʾl dīn* |
| 6 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 7 | المظفر | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 8 | كيكاوس | كيكاوس | *kaikāūs* |
| 9 | سلطان | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 10 | بن | بن | *bin* |
| 11 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 12 | بن | بن | *bin* |
| 13 | سلطان | سلطان | *sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 2 | | هذه | *hazihi* |
| 3 |  | الفضة | *al fiddat* |
| 4 | | بحضرة | *bī hadrat* |
| 5 | | لكنوتى | *lakhnautī* |
| 6 | | منخراج بنك | *min kharāz banka*[33] |

[33] For comparing 6 for which only a small part visible on this coin, please refer back to S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., B88, p. 159.

# SHAMS AL-DĪN FĪRŪZ

## (AH 700-22/CE 1300-22)

Shams al-Dīn Daulat was succeeded by Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (AH 700-16 and AH 719-22) who was a usurper too. Shihab al-Dīn Bughda (AH 717-8), son of Fīrūz Shāh, succeeded Bengal Sultānate but was later ousted by a usurper Jalāl al-Dīn Kurban (AH 719). But Fīrūz Shāh was alive and captured the throne back in AH 719. Second reign of Fīrūz Shāh was succeeded by his another son Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh.

### Coin B-18-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq, Naskh* and *Kufic al-Bangalia*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

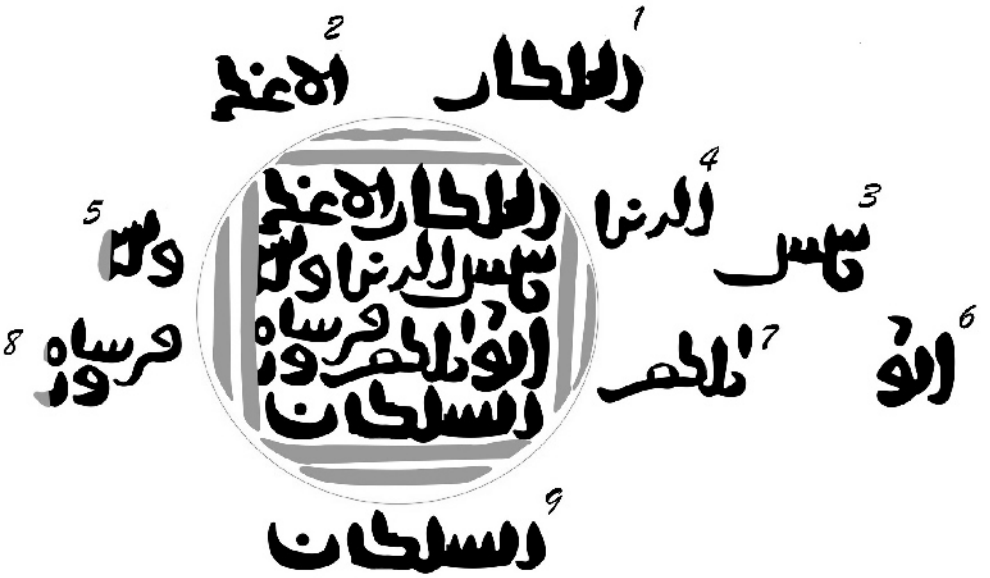
Legend in the field inside square margin,
*al-sultān al-a'ẓam shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-muẓaffar fīrūz shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

Legend in the central field,
*al-imām al-musta'sim amīr al-mu'minīn*

Mint Hadarat ___???
Date: not read

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | الاعظم | الاعظم | *al-aʿẓam* |
| 3 | شمس | شمس | *shams* |
| 4 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | والدين | والدين | *waʾl dīn* |
| 6 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 7 | المظفر | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 8 | فيروز شاه | فيروز شاه | *fīrūz shāh* |
| 9 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | الامام | *al-imām* |
| 2 | | المتعصم | *al-musta'sim* |
| 3 | | امير | *amīr* |
| 4 | | المومنين | *al-mu'minīn* |
| 5 | | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 6 | | هذه | *hazihi* |
| 7 | | الفضة | *al fiddat* |
| 8 | | بحضرة | *bī hadrat* |

# JALĀL AL-DĪN KURBAN
## (AH 719/CE 1319)

Syed Ejaz Hussain mentions this ruler as Jalal-Ud-Din Kuret Shāh.[34] Another alternative reading suggests this ruler's name as Jalal al-Dīn Guzban Shāh.[35] Whatever the ruler's name is, he is an ephemeral usurper and only known mint of his coins is Khittah Lakhnautī. Therefore, the coin was not issued from probably the center of the capital Lakhnautī but from somewhere in the territory of Lakhnautī.[36] Date available on his coins is AH 719 (CE 1319). Therefore, Kurban was probably a rebel, issued coins in his own name but could not confirm his foothold in the sultānate or had been defeated by other contestant(s) in the sultānate.

**Coin B-20-01**

**Silver Tanka**

**Obverse:** *al-sultān al-a'ẕam jalāl al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẕaffar kurban shāh al-sultān*

**Reverse:** *al al-imām amīr al-musta'sim al-mu'minīn,* Mint: Khitta Lakhnautī

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth, Muhaqqaq* and *Kufic al-Bangalia*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 2 | | کربن شاه | *kurban shāh* |

[34] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 78.
[35] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B115, P. 162.
[36] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 78

# GIYATH AL-DĪN BAHĀDUR SHĀH

## (AH 717-28/CE 1317-28)

After death of Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh, a struggle for succession spread among his sons.[37] Ibn Batuta and Barani mention about the conflict among potential successors of Fīrūz Shāh.[38] The conflict was so fierce that for securing power, Bahādur Shāh, a son of Fīrūz Shāh, killed his brothers, one of them being Qatlu Khan.[39] Later, a few high officials of Bengal Sultānate with or without one or two brothers of Bahādur Shāh, who managed to escape from the bloodshed, went to Delhi and complained to the Tughlaq sultān about the incidence. That gave an opportunity to Delhi to get back their dominance over Bengal. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughlaq, sultān of Delhi, sent his adopted son Bahram alias Tatar Khan with a strong army against Bahādur Shāh. Tatar Khan defeated Bahādur Shāh, captured him and took him to Delhi as captive. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughlaq also placed Lakhnautī under Nāsir al-Dīn Ibrahim (AH 724-7). Sūnargāon and Satgāon were placed under Tatar Khan.[40] Afterward Nāsir al-Dīn issued coins in joint name with Delhi sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughlaq. Ibrahim issued coins in joint name with Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq where he called him as *al-sultān al-mu'azzam* and mentioned Tughluq as *al-sultān al-a'ẓam* keeping title of Tughluq superior to his title. After death of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughlaq, his son Muhammad bin Tughlaq succeeded in Delhi Sultānate and it is found from some descriptions that, Muhammad almost immediately after his accession released Bahādur Shāh and reinstated him as ruler in at least a part of Bengal upon condition that Bahādur may issue coins in joint name with Muhammad bin Tughlaq.[41] Bahādur Shāh 'continued to issue coins from the Sūnargāon mint in the joint names of himself and the Tughlaq sultān till AH 728/CE 1328.[42] Similarly Nāsir al-Dīn Ibrahim, brother of Bahādur at Lakhnautī also issued coins in joint names with Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq and his son till AH 727.[43] Bahādur Shāh, later in AH 728, declared independence, which resulted into ruthless action from Delhi against him.[44] Tatar Khan killed him and sent his skin to Delhi for demonstrating in the city to show consequence of disobedience to Delhi sultānate.[45] After his death, Bengal again went under direct rule of Delhi.

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[37] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p. 115.
[38] Ibid., Footnote 2-3, p. 115.
[39] Ibid., p. 115.
[40] Ibid., p. 116.
[41] Ibid., p. 117.
[42] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B115-7, p. 164.
[43] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p. 117; S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B. 112-3, p. 163.
[44] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B115, P. 164.
[45] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p. 118.

## Coin B-22-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

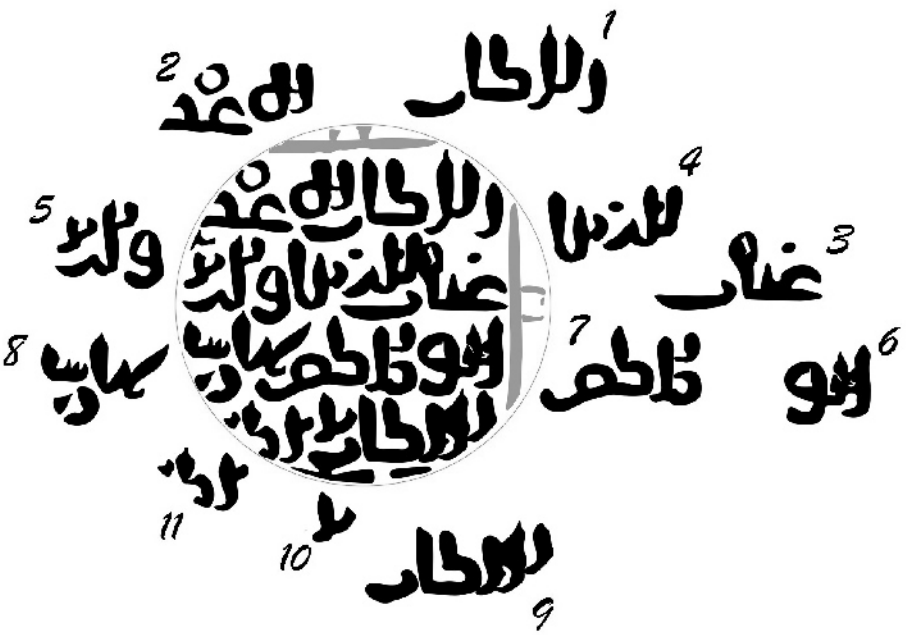
Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*al-sultān al-a'ẓam ghiyath al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar bahādur shāh al-sultān bin al-sultān*

Reverse

Legend in the central field,
*al-imām al-musta'sim amīr al-mu'minīn*
Mint: Khitta Lakhnautī
Date: 722

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | الاعظم | *al-aʿẕam* |
| 3 | | غياث | *ghiyāth* |
| 4 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | | والدين | *waʾl dīn* |
| 6 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 7 | | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 8 | | بهادرشا(ه) | *bahādur shā(h)* |
| 9 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 10 | | بن | *bin* |
| 11 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

# MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLUQ

Muhammad bin Tughluq was sultān of Delhi from AH 725 to 752 (CE 1325-51), while his reign over Bengal lasted till AH 735 (CE 1335) when local rulers declared independence. As mentioned earlier, Tatar Khan killed Bahādur Shāh and afterward Bengal went under direct rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq. His governors at Bengal issued coins in the name of Muhammad bin Tughluq from local mints.

## Coin B-24-01

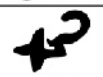
### Silver Tanka

**Obverse:** At the center, *al-mujāhid fī sabīl allāh muhammad bin tughluq shāh;* Four caliphs on the four sides without a border. From top anti clock-wise, *abū bakr/ʻumar//ʻuthmān/ʻalī*

**Reverse:** Shahāda, mint and date in the margin.

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalaia* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 2 | | بن | *bin* |
| 3 | | تغلق | *tughluq* |
| 4 | | شاه | *shāh* |

CHAPTER 5

# EARLY INDEPENDENT SULTĀNS

The reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, the Sultān of Delhi, in Bengal was challenged in Sunārgāon by Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh in CE 1330 (AH 730) and by 'Alā al-Dīn 'Alī in Lakhnautī in CE 1341/2 (AH 742). 'Alī was succeeded by Shams al-Dīn Iliyas Shāh in mid CE 1345 (AH 746). Later Ilyās Shāh extended his control in Sunārgāon too after death of successor of Mubārak Shāh. In CE 1352 Ilyās Shāhī dynasty was founded by Ilyās Shāh who became the sole independent ruler in Sunārgāon, Satgāon and Fīrūzabad.[1] First reign of Ilyās Shāhī dynasty continued from CE 1352 to 1414 and major sultāns during this period were, Ilyās Shāh (CE 1345-57), Sikandar Shāh (CE 1357-89), Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẕam Shāh (CE 1389-1410), Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh (CE 1410-2), Shihab al-Dīn Bāyazīd Shāh (CE 1412-4) and 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh bin Bāyazīd Shāh (CE 1414). Bāyazīd Shāh was not a true successor, as he was the slave[2] of Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh and ascended throne by killing his master by himself or with help of Raja Ganesh,[3] who had to face huge chaos during his tenure[4]. Though 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh was the last ruler of this dynasty with coins bearing dates, he is only known from his coins[5] and many of the historians wrongly recorded Bāyazīd Shāh as the last ruler of this dynasty. Coins of Qutb al-Dīn A'ẕam Shāh, Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh and Nāsir al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh have been attributed to the chaotic period of post Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh of this dynasty and their coins do not bear date. These usurpers or contestants to the sultānate have been placed in this dynasty.

| **Serial No.** | **Name of the Coin Issuing Authority** | **Reign** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **AH** | **CE** |
| 25 | Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh | 734-50 | 1333-49 |
| 26 | 'Alā al-Dīn 'Alī Shāh | 742-6 | 1341-5 |
| 27 | Ikhtiyar al-Dīn Ghāzī Shāh (s/o Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak) | 750-3 | 1349-52 |
| 28 | Shams al-Dīn Iliyas Shāh | 746-58 | 1345-57 |
| 29 | Sikandar Shāh (s/o Iliyas Shāh) | 758-92 | 1357-89 |
| 30 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh (s/o Sikandar Shāh) | 792-813 | 1389-1410 |

[1] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka (2001), op. cit., p. 168; Ali, M. M., op. cit., pp. 132-136; Sarkar, S. J. (ed.), op. cit., pp. 103-11.

[2] Ali, M. M., op. cit., p. 147; Sarkar, S. J. (ed.), op. cit., p. 116.

[3] N. Nāsir and M.S. Islam, 'Sirāj al-Dīn 'Sikandar' (?) Shāh- a new ruler of the Bengal Sultānate', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 220, 2014, p. 40; Ali, M. M., op. cit., p. 147.

[4] Ali, M. M., op. cit., pp. 146-60.

[5] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p.186.

| Serial No. | Name of the Coin Issuing Authority | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 31 | Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh (s/o A'ẓam Shāh) | 813-5 | 1410-2 |
| 32 | Shihab al-Dīn Bāyazīd Shāh | 815-7 | 1412-4 |
| 33 | 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (s/o Bāyazīd Shāh) | 817 | 1414 |
| 34 | Qutb al-Dīn A'zam Shāh | nd | nd |
| 35 | Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh | nd | nd |
| 36 | Nāsir al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh | nd | nd |

# FAKHR AL-DĪN MUBĀRAK SHĀH

## (AH 734-50/CE 1333-49)

Mubārak was an armor bearer of Bahrām khan, the then Governor of Sunārgāon. After death of the later, Mubārak seized the control over Sunārgāon and proclaimed himself as sultān taking the title Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh. Immediately he was attacked by the joint force of Qadr Khan and 'Izz al-Dīn Yahyā. Mubārak Shāh fled from Sunārgāon where Qadr Khan stayed for a while. After death of Qadr Khan, who was killed by his own men, Mubārak Shāh again occupied Sunārgāon in AH 739 (CE 1338-9) and continued to rule till AH 750 (CE 1349).

### Coin B-25-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth, Muhaqqaq* and *Nashk*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

Legend in the field,
*al-sultān al-a'ẕam fakhr al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-muẕaffar mubārak shāh al'sultān*

Reverse

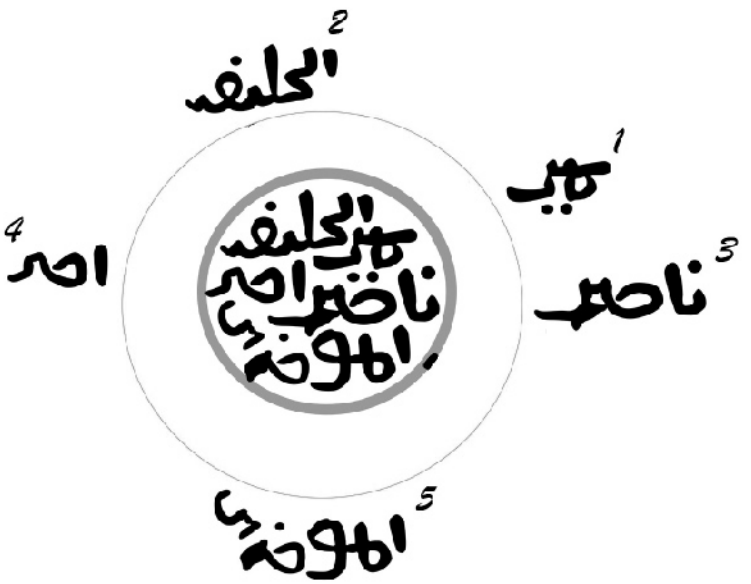
Legend in the central field,
*yamīn al-khalīfat nāsir amīr al-mū'minīn*

Mint: hadrat jalāl sunārgāon
Date: 747

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | الاعظم | الاعظم | *al-aʿẓam* |
| 3 | فخر | فخر | *fakhr* |
| 4 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | والدين | والدين | *waʾl dīn* |
| 6 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 7 | المظفر | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 8 | مباركشا | مباركشا(ه) | *mubārak shāh* |
| 9 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Center**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | يمين | يمين | *yamīn* |
| 2 | الخليفة | الخليفة | *al-khalīfat* |
| 3 | ناصر | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 4 | امير | امير | *amīr* |
| 5 | المومنين | المومنين | *al-mū'minīn* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Margin**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 2 | | هذه | *hazihi* |
| 3 | | السكه | *al-sikkah* |
| 4 | | بحضرة | *bī hadrat* |
| 5 | | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 6 | | سنارکانو | *sunārkānū* (sunārgāon) |
| 7 | | سنة | *sanah* (date) |
| 8 | | سبع | *sab'a* (seventh) |
| 9 | | واربعين | *wa arba'in* (forty) |
| 10 | | وسبعمائة | *wa sab'amainah* (seven hundred) |

# ‘ALĀ AL-DĪN ‘ALĪ SHĀH

## (AH 742-6/CE 1341-5)

After Qadr Khan- who was the governor of Lakhnautī- was killed, his general ‘Alī captured the throne and later in a suitable time declared independence taking the title ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Alī Shāh. He was later dethroned by Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh.

## Coin B-26-01

### Silver Tanka

**Obverse:** *al-sultān al-a’z̲am ‘alā al-dunyā wa’l dīn abū’l mu̲z̲affar ‘alī shāh al-sultān*

**Reverse:** *sikandar al-zamān al-makhsūs ba-ināyat al-rahmān nāsir amīr al-mū’minīn*

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Thuluth*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Ruler’s Name and Title**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | علاء | علا | *‘alā* |
| 2 | علیشاہ | علیشاہ | *‘alī shāh* |

# IKHTIYAR AL-DĪN GHĀZĪ SHĀH

## (AH 750-3/CE 1349-52)

After death of Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh, his son Ghāzī became ruler of Sunārgāon taking the title Ikhtiyar al-Dīn abū al-muẕaffar Ghāzī Shāh in the year AH 750 (CE 1349) who was later dethroned by Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh.

### Coin B-27-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Obverse:** *al-sultān al-aʿẕam Ikhtiyar al-dunyā waʾl dīn abū al-muẕaffar ghāzī shāh al-sultān bin al-sultān*

**Reverse:** *yamīn al-khalīfat nāsir amīr al-mūʾminīn, Mint:* hadrat jalāl sunārgāon, Date: 752.

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth, Muhaqqaq* and *Bihari*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | اختيار | اختيار | *Ikhtiyar* |
| 2 | غازيشاه | غازيشاه | *ghāzī shāh* |

# SHAMS AL-DĪN ILYĀS SHĀH

## (AH 746-58/CE 1345-57)

From AH 734/5 to 984 Bengal enjoyed a period of independent sultānate. During this period there were a few incidences of warfare of Bengal sultāns with Delhi. Ilyās Shāh got opportunity to consolidate his position in Bengal, because Muhammad bin Tughluq was preoccupied with rebellions in northern and southern India.[6] After having established in Lakhnautī, Ilyās Shāh marched towards Tirhut of north Bihar and ousted Delhi governor and brought that territory under control of Bengal.[7] Later, he brought north and part of south Bihar under his jurisdiction.[8] After death of Fakhr Al Dīn Mubārak of Eastern Bengal, Ilyās Shāh expanded his territory to that region and established control over Sunārgāon.

After death of Muhammad bin Tughluq, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq ascended the throne of Delhi in CE 1351 (AH 752). In the initial years Fīrūz Shāh was busy with consolidating Delhi and could not pay attention to Bengal. But after he had consolidated his power in Delhi, he started his journey towards Bengal from Delhi on Shawal in AH 754 (November, 1353).[9] He marched with a huge army including 90,000 cavalry, a large number of infantry and 1,000 war boats. He advanced to Bengal by way of Oudh, Bihar and Tirhut. Ilyās Shāh strategically advanced towards Bihar to stop Tughluq's progress to Bengal. Description of this journey of Tughluq to Bengal is sourced in present texts from contemporary historians officially appointed by Delhi rulers. Nothing is written in Bengal records. Most of the descriptions are full of flattery to Delhi rulers and seems mostly inconsistent.

Based on those descriptions what can be reliably summarized is that, Ilyās Shāh failed to resist progress of Tughluq on Bihar border and Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq advanced towards Fīrūzabad (Pandua), the then capital of Ilyās Shāh. That forced Ilyās Shāh to take shelter in a fort named 'Ekdāla' that has been identified by Westmacott as a village located in Dinajpur district of present time.[10] Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq issued a proclamation guaranteeing safety of life and property of people but calling upon them to disassociate from Ilyās Shāh. Tughluq also denounced Ilyās Shāh as rebel. Fīrūz Shāh marched towards the fort where Ilyās Shāh took shelter and a battle between the two armies took place at a distance of about 14 miles from Ekdāla.[11] Ilyās Shāh faced a defeat in the battle but could manage to flee back to Ekdāla fort. Tughluq failed to capture Ekdāla fort and finally he had to withdraw his army due to mosquitoes or rain.[12] Whatever the cause was, the two forces reached to a truce and ultimately Ilyās Shāh survived and could save Bengal as independent sultānate.

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[6] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p. 132-3.
[7] JBORS, 1936, pp.81-9, in M.M. Ali, op. cit. p. 132-3.
[8] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p.133.
[9] Tabaqat-i-Akbar, tr. B. Due. Volume 1, p. 244.
[10] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p. 134.
[11] Ibid., p. 135.
[12] Ibid., p. 135.

During Sikandar Shāh, son of Ilyās Shāh, Bengal was attacked by Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq again and that mission of Tughluq failed too. Afterward Bengal remained independent for a long time. Numismatic books present a long series of coins showing independence of Bengal sultānate and no reference of coin of external dominance during AH 735 to 945 (CE 1334-538). Noteworthy that neighboring kingdom Tripura issued a few coins that claimed that their kingdom captured a part of Bengal like Chittagong, Sylhet and even Sunārgāon. Probably that sustained for a very short period of time and that is subject to be further supported by evidences from inside of Bengal and there is no such evidence produced yet.

## Coin B-28-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

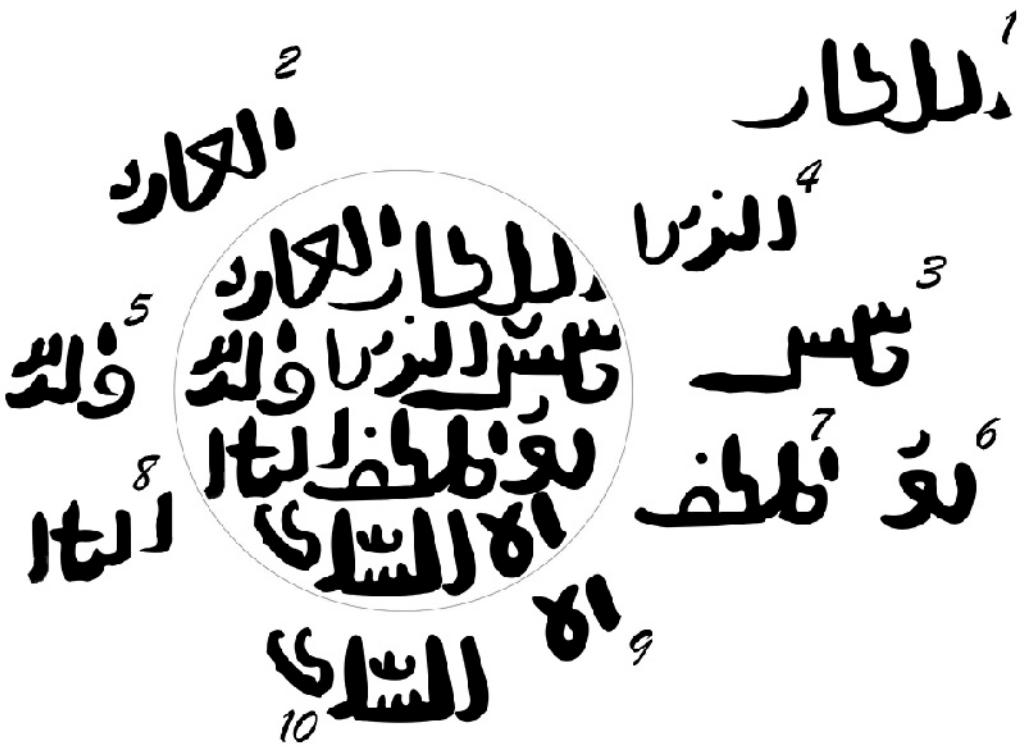
Obverse

Legend in the field,
*al-sultān al-'ādil shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar ilyās shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

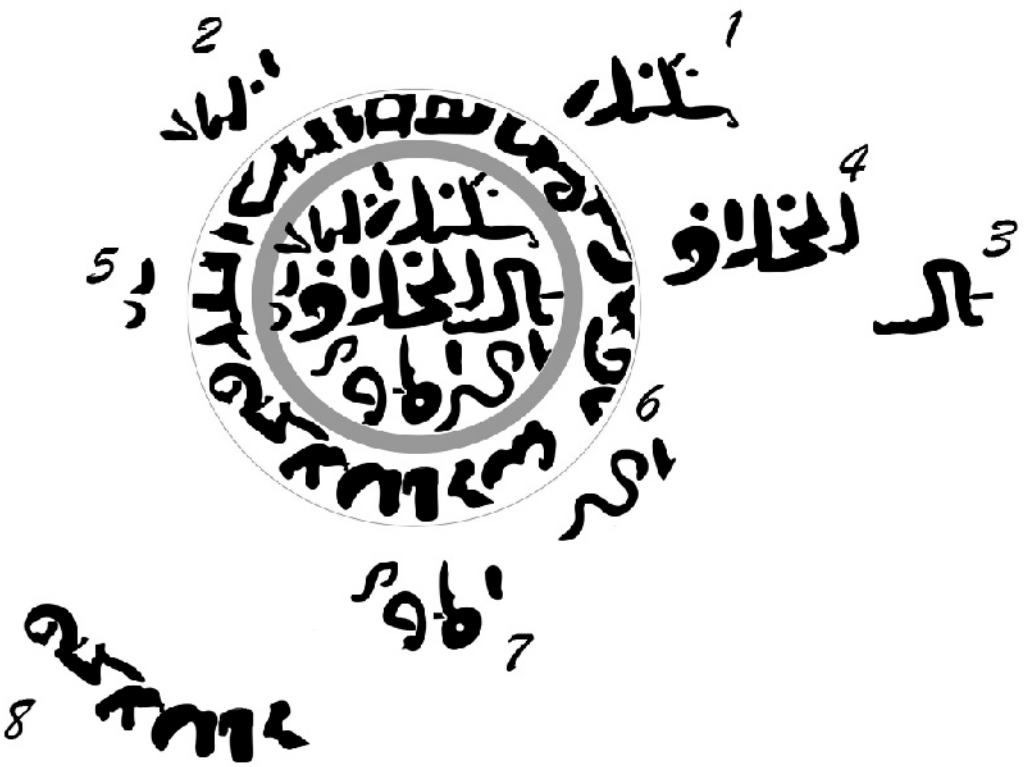
Legend in the central field,
*sikandar al-thānī yamīn al-khalāfa nāsir amīr al-mū'minīn*
Mint: Fīrūzābād
Date: not read

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | العادل | العادل | *al-ʻādil* |
| 3 | شمس | شمس | *shams* |
| 4 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | والدين | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 6 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 7 | المظفر | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 8 | الياس | الياس | *ilyās* |
| 9 | شاه | شاه | *shāh* |
| 10 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | سکندر | *sikandar* |
| 2 | | الثانی | *al-thānī* |
| 3 | | یمین | *yamīn* |
| 4 | | الخلافة | *al-khalāfah* |
| 5 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 6 | | امیر | *amīr* |
| 7 | | المومنین | *al-mu'minīn* |
| 8 | | فیروزاباد | *fīrūzābād* |

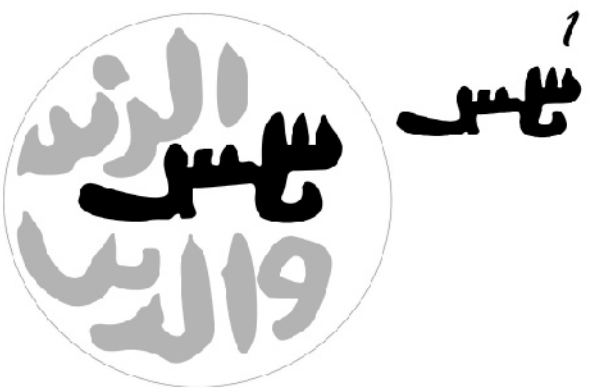
## Coin B-28-02

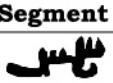
### Silver Quarter Tanka

**Obverse:** *shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn*

**Reverse:** *abū'l muẓaffar ilyās shāh*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | شمس | *shams* |

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | الياس | *ilyās* |
| 2 | | شاه | *shāh* |

# SIKANDAR BIN ILYĀS SHĀH

## (AH 758-92/CE 1357-89)

Sikandar Shāh succeeded Ilyās Shāh in the year AH 758 (CE 1357). Mentioned earlier, it appears that after accession of Sikandar Shāh, the Emperor of Delhi Firūz Shāh Tughluq attacked Bengal for the second time in the year AH 760 (CE 1358-9). Sikandar Shāh avoided the battle with Delhi Roayl Army by taking shelter inside the fort of Ekdāla. Firūz Shāh captured Firūzābād and moved to Ekdāla fort and seized the fort for a while. But Delhi force could not break through and could not beat the strategy of Sikandar Shāh but had to accept truce, withdraw army and go back to Delhi.

Sikandar's reign ended in AH 792 (CE 1389). According to Reaz-us-Salatin there was a battle between him and his beloved eldest son Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẕam, which was resulted from conspiracy of A'ẕam's step mother who wanted to see one of her own sons to the throne after Sikandar Shāh. That did not happen. A'ẕam Shāh succeeded Sikandar Shāh after this battle.

### Coin B-29-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* and *Thuluth*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

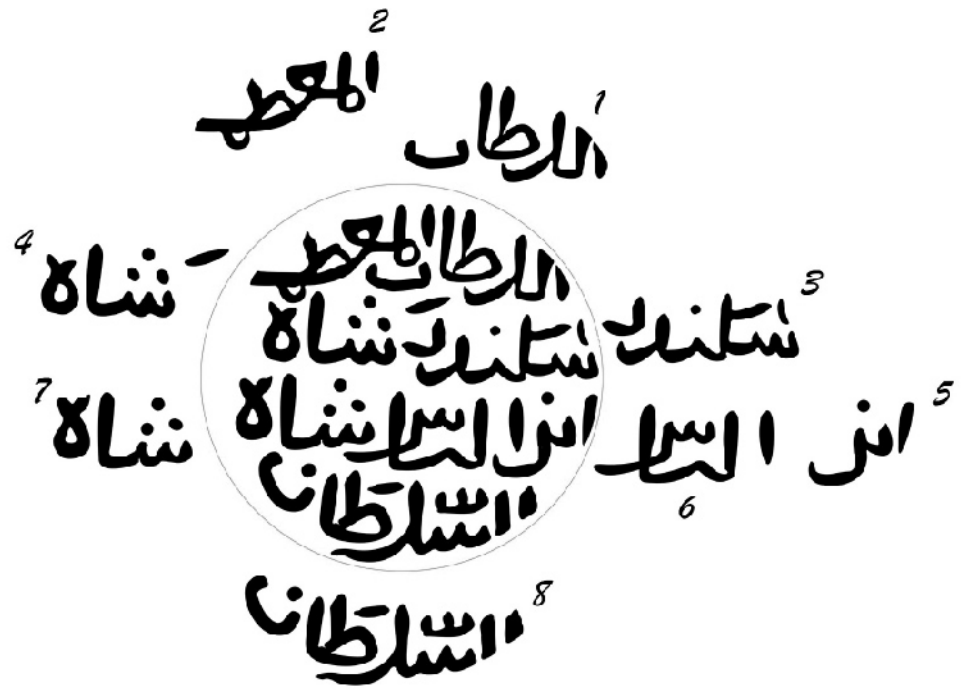
Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*al-sultān al-mu'aẕẕam sikandar shāh ibn ilyās shāh al-sultān*

Legend in the central field,
*yamīn khalīfat allāh nāsir amīr al-mū'minīn*

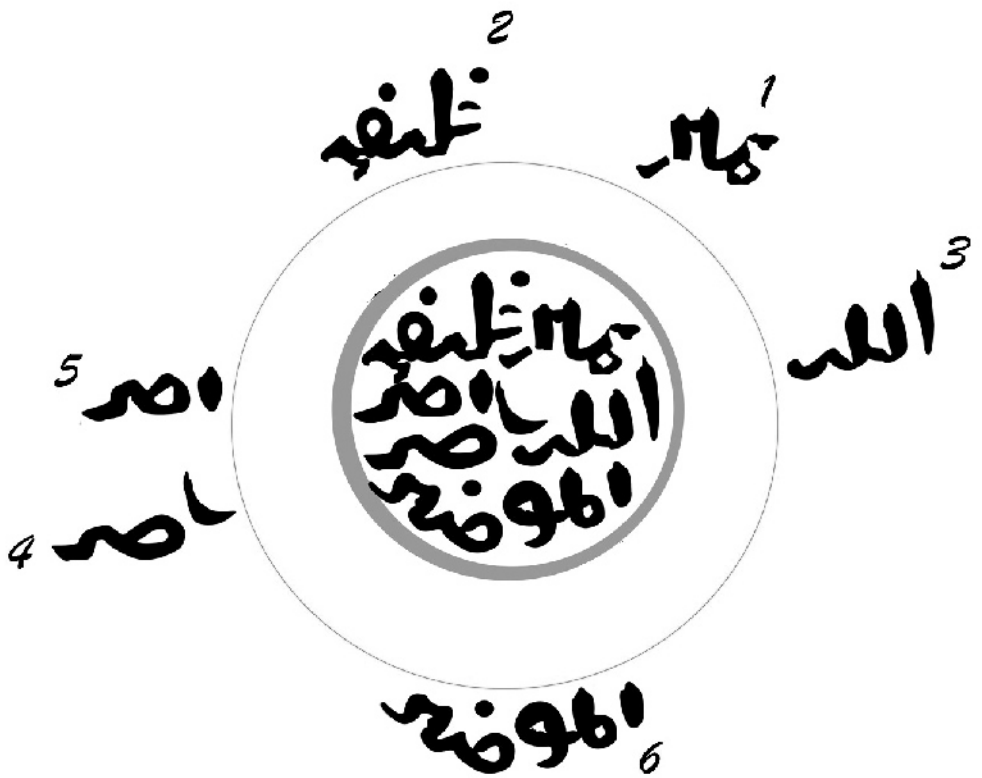
Date: 759

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



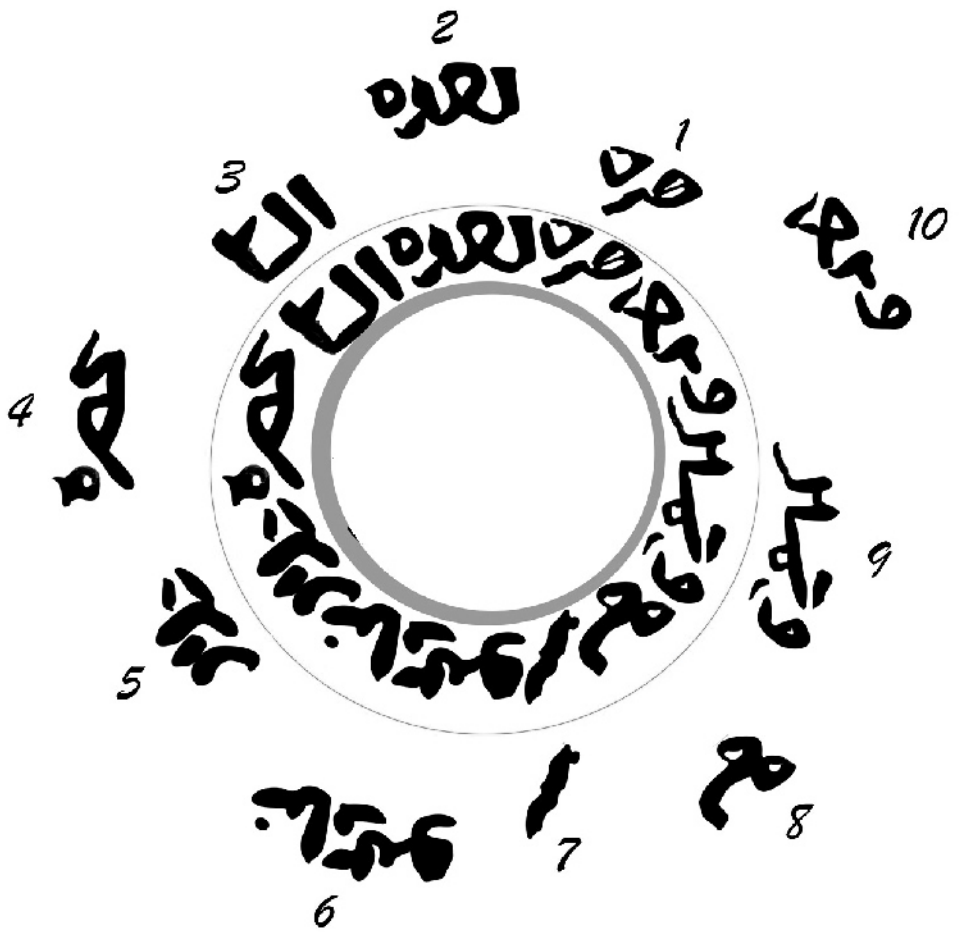

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | المعظم | المعظم | *al-mu'aẓẓam* |
| 3 | سكندر | سكندر | *sikandar* |
| 4 | شاه | ساه | *shāh* |
| 5 | ابن | ابن | *ibn* |
| 6 | الياس | الياس | *ilyās* |
| 7 | شاه | ساه | *shāh* |
| 8 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Central Legend**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | يمين | *yamīn* |
| 2 | | خليفة | *al-khalīfat* |
| 3 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 4 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 5 | | امير | *amīr* |
| 6 | | المومنين | *al-mu'minīn* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Margin Legend**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ضرب | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 2 | هذه | هذه | *hazihi* |
| 3 | السكه | السكه | *al-sikkah* |
| 4 | بحضرة | بحضرة | *bī hadrat* |
| 5 | جلال | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 6 | سنارگانو | سنارگانو | *sunārgāon* |
| 7 | سنه | سنه | *sanah* (date) |
| 8 | تسعه | تسعه | *tis'ah* (nine) |
| 9 | وخمسن | وخمسن | *wa khamsin* (and fifty) |
| 10 | وسبعمائه | وسبعمائه | *wa sab'amayah* (and seven hundred) |

## Coin B-29-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq, Naskh* and *Thuluth*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

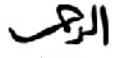
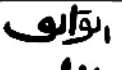
Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*al-wāthiq bi-ta'yīd al-rahmān abū'l mujāhid sikandar shāh ibn ilyās shāh al-sultān*
On the margin,
Four caliphs &
*al-imām al-a'z̲am wa'l khalīfat al-mu'azz̲am*

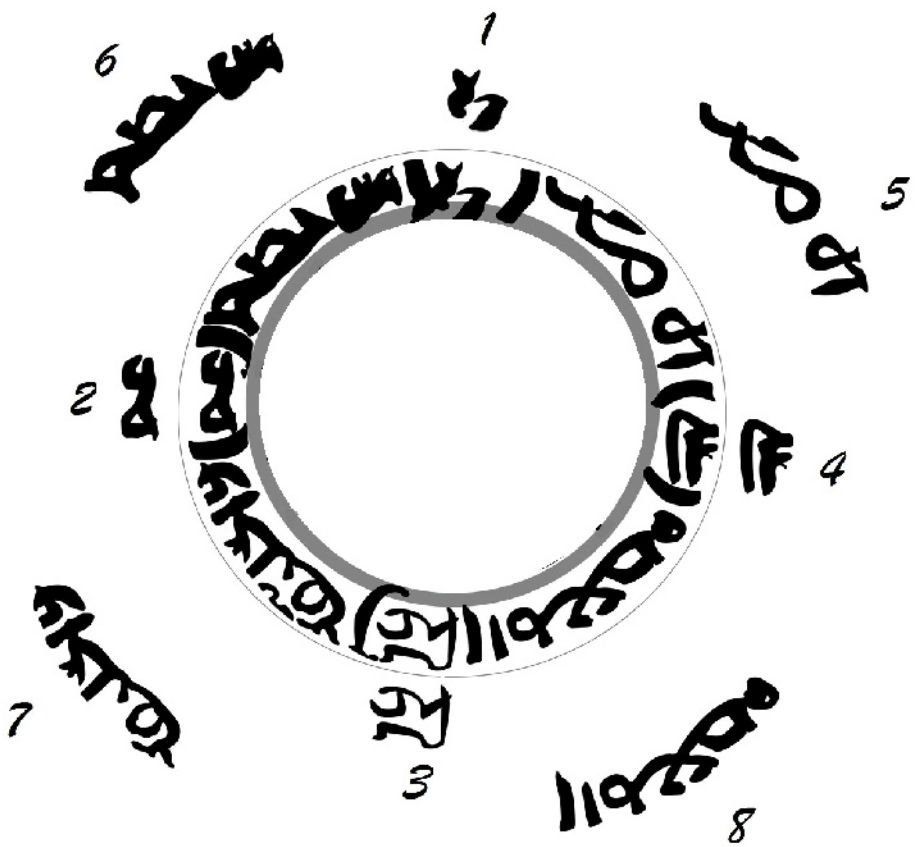
Reverse

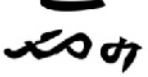
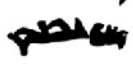
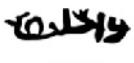
Legend in the central field,
*yamīn khalīfat allāh nāsir amīr al-mū'minīn ghawth al-islām wa'l muslimīn khallada khalifātahu*
On the margin,
Mint: Fīrūzabād
Date: 786 (Not convincingly read)

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse Central Legend**

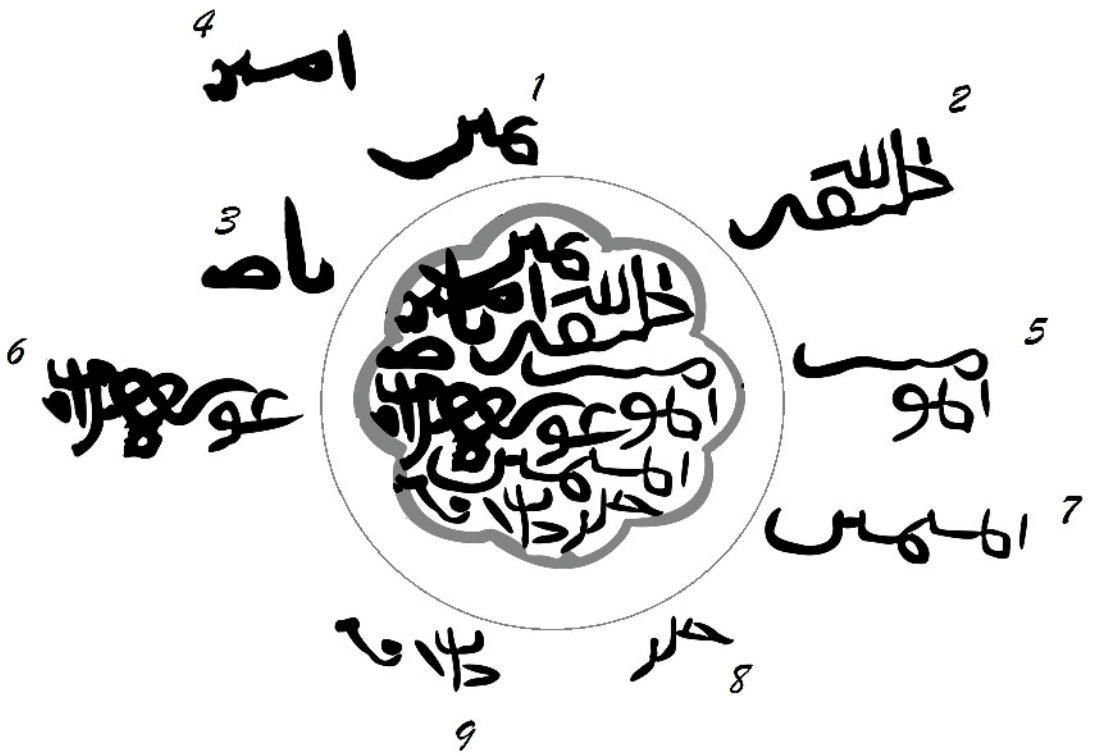
| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | الواثق | *al-wāthiq* |
| 2 | | بتائيد | *bi-ta'yīd* |
| 3 |  | الرحمن | *al-rahman* |
| 4 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 5 | | المجاهد | *al- mujāhid* |
| 6 |  | سكندر شاه | *sikandar shāh* |
| 7 |  | ابن | *ibn* |
| 8 |  | الياس | *ilyās* |
| 9 |  | شاه | *shāh* |
| 10 |  | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse Margin**



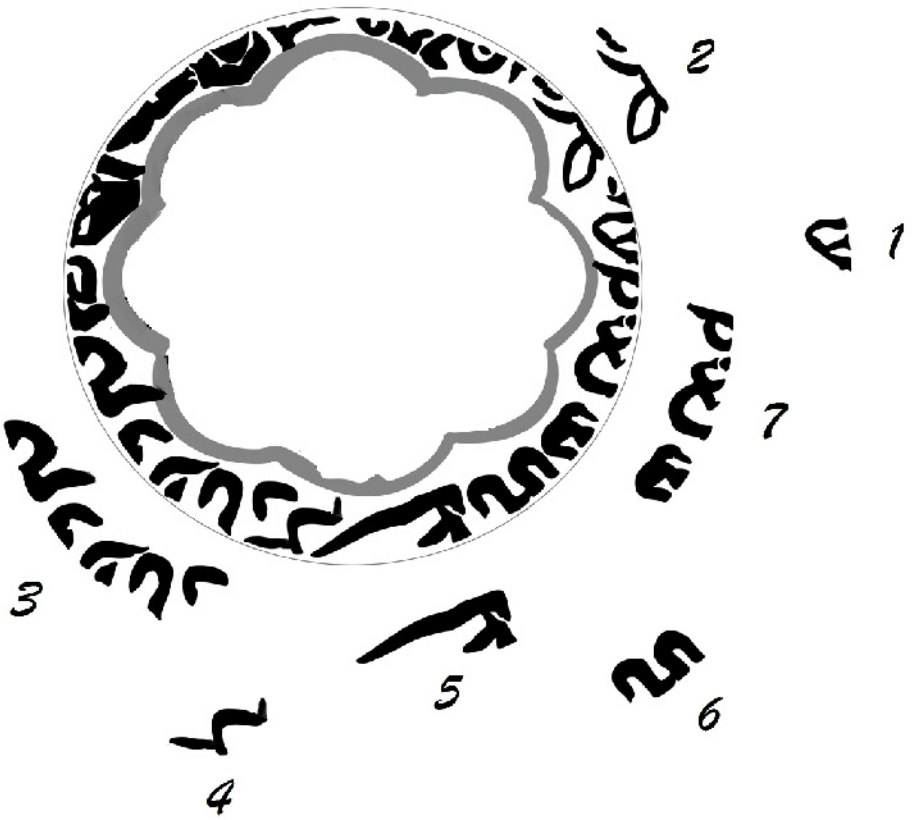

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ابوبکر | *abū bakr* |
| 2 | | عمر | *‘umar* |
| 3 | | عثمان | *‘uthmān* |
| 4 | | علی | *‘alī* |
| 5 |  | الامام | *al-imām* |
| 6 |  | الاعظم | *al-a’ẕam* |
| 7 |  | والخلیفه | *wa’l khalīfat* |
| 8 | | المعظم | *al-mu’aẓẓam* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Centre**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | يمين | يمين | *yamīn* |
| 2 | خليفة الله | خليفة الله | *khalīfat allāh* |
| 3 | ناصر | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 4 | امير | امير | *amīr* |
| 5 | المومنين | المومنين | *al-mū'minīn* |
| 6 | غوث الاسلام | غوث الاسلام | *ghawth al-islām* |
| 7 | والمسلمين | والمسلمين | *(wa)'l muslimīn* |
| 8 | خلد | خلد | *khallada* |
| 9 | خلافته | خلافته | *khalifātahu* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Margin**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 2 | | هذه | *hazihi* |
| 3 | | فروزاباد | *fīrūzābād* |
| 4 | | سنة | *sanah* (date) |
| 5 | | ست | *sitta* (seven)? |
| 6 | | ثمانين | *thamānīn* (eighty)? |
| 7 | | سبعمائة | *sab'amāiah* (seven hundred) |

# GHIYĀTH AL-DĪN A'ẒAM SHĀH

## (AH 792-813/CE 1389-1410)

Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẓam was the most famous and the greatest ruler of the early Ilyās Shāhī dynasty of Bengal. He had a significantly long reign in Bengal that lasted about 23 years from CE 1389 to1410. But before A'ẓam Shāh had started his elegant reign as sultān of Bengal, he became a rebel during reign of his father. He was favorite son of Sultān Sikandar Shāh.[13] According to *Reaz-us-Salatin,* as has been mentioned earlier, conspiracy and machination of one of A'ẓam Shāh's step mother drove him into rebellion. He escaped to Eastern Bengal from where he ran rebellions against his father and issued coins in his own name.[14] There he remained 'nominally subordinate or covertly resistant to paternal authority'.[15] Finally, the pathetic fight took place between army of father and son. The fight took place in the year AH 792/CE 1389 at Goalpara near Pandua. In this fight army of Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẓam Shāh ultimately defeated army of Sikandar Shāh. The father suffered wound in the fight and died of it. A'ẓam Shāh became sultān of Bengal and issued coins calling himself as son of Sikandar Shāh and grandson of Ilyās Shāh.[16] This shows that, despite of the pathetic incidences, A'ẓam Shāh did not have hatred against his father. Instead he showed pride of his family and pride of being son of Sikandar Shāh.

### Coin B-30-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq al-me'dania.* It is like *Thuluth,* but based on slanting stroke of the alphabets it has been concluded that, it is *Muhaqqaq* type calligraphy.

[13] Ali, M. M., op. cit., p.140.
[14] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., coin ref. B225-9, pp.177-8.
[15] H. Blochmann, op. cit., p. 52.
[16] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., coin ref. B235-263, pp.179-82.

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

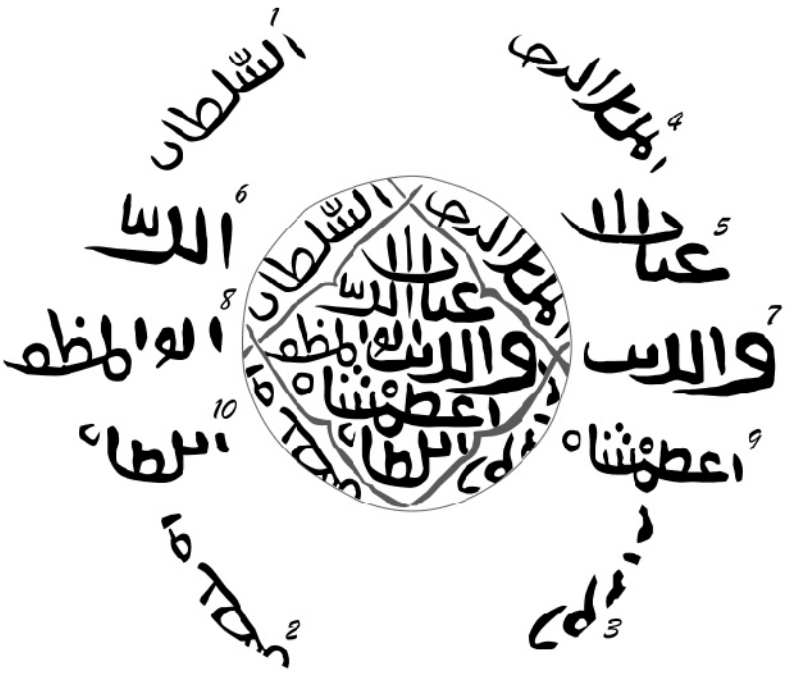
**Obverse**

Legend in the central field,
*ghiyāth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẕaffar a'ẕam shāh al-sultān*
on the margin,
*al-sultān al-a'ẕam al-mu'ayyad bi-ta'yīd al-mulk al-rahmān*

**Reverse**

Legend in the central field,
*nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn ghawth al-islām wa'l muslimīn khallada mulkahu*
On the margin,
*zarb hazihi al fiddat bī hadrat fīruzābād*
date: seven hundred ninety seven

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | الاعظم | *al-aʿẕam* |
| 3 | | المدبتاىد | *al-muʾayyad bi-taʾyīd* |
| 4 | | الملك الرحمن | *al-mulk al-rahmān* |
| 5 | | غىاث | *ghiyāth* |
| 6 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 7 | | والدين | *waʾl dīn* |
| 8 | | ابوالمظفر | *abūʾl muẕaffar* |
| 9 | | اعظم شاه | *aʿẕam shāh* |
| 10 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 2 | | امیر | *amīr* |
| 3 | | المومنین | *al-mu'minīn* |
| 4 | | غوث الاسلام | *ghawth al-islām* |
| 5 | | والمسلمین | *wa'l muslimīn* |
| 6 | | خلدملکه | *khallada mulkahu* |
| 7 | | ضرب هذه الفضة | *zarb hazihi al fiddat* |
| 8 | | بحضرة | *bī hadrat* |
| 9 | | فیروزاباد | *fīrūzābād* |
| 10 | | (فی)سنة | *(fi)sanah* (date) |
| 11 | | سبع | *sab'a* (seventh) |
| 12 | | وتسعین | *wa tis'in* (and ninety) |
| 13 | | وسبعمایة | *wa sab'ami'ah* (and seven hundred) |

## Coin B-30-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq al-me'dania.* Like previous it seems like *Thuluth* too, but its slanting stroke shows that it is a *Muhaqqaq.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

**Obverse**

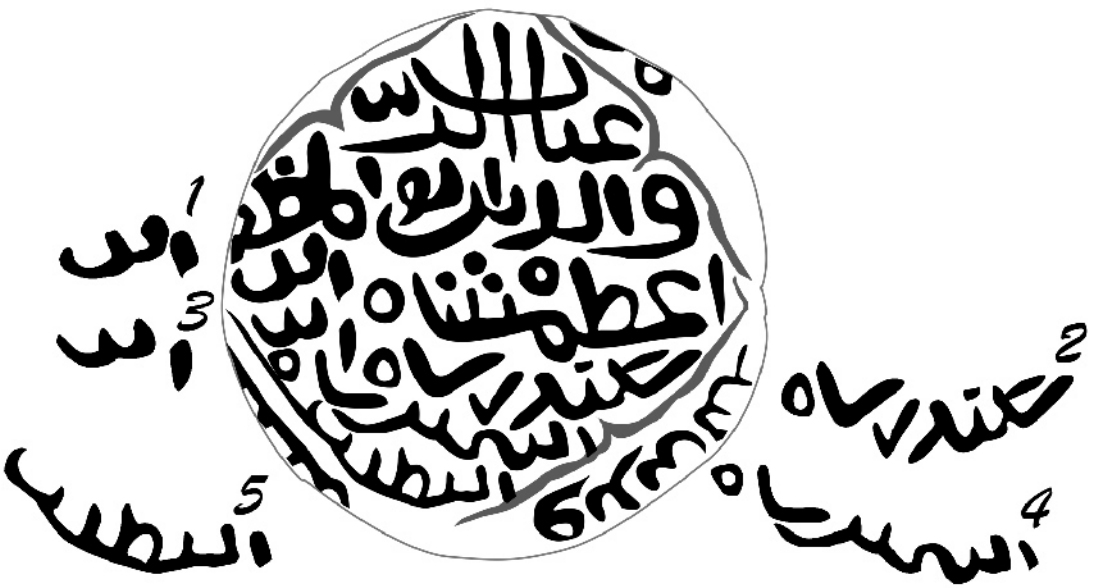
Legend in the central field,
*ghiyāth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar a'zam shāh al'sultān ibn sikandar shāh ibn ilyās shāh al-sultān*
On the margin,
*al-sultān al-a'ẓam al-mu'ayyad bi-ta'yīd al-mulk al-rahmān*

**Reverse**

Legend in the central field,
*nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn ghawth al-islām wa'l muslimīn khallada mulkahu*
On the margin,
*zarb hazihi al fiddat bī hadrat (fīrūzābād)*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

On this coin the family tree of the sultān has been added to the legend presented in the previous coin of Ghiyāth al- dīn A'zam Shāh. The additional part of the legend on this coin has been illustrated next.




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 2 | | سکندر شاہ | *sikandar shāh* |
| 3 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 4 | | الیاس شاہ | *ilyās shāh* |
| 5 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

## Coin B-30-03

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth* and *Muhaqqaq al-me'dania.* It is like *Thuluth,* but its slanting stroke shown it is a *Muhaqqaq.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

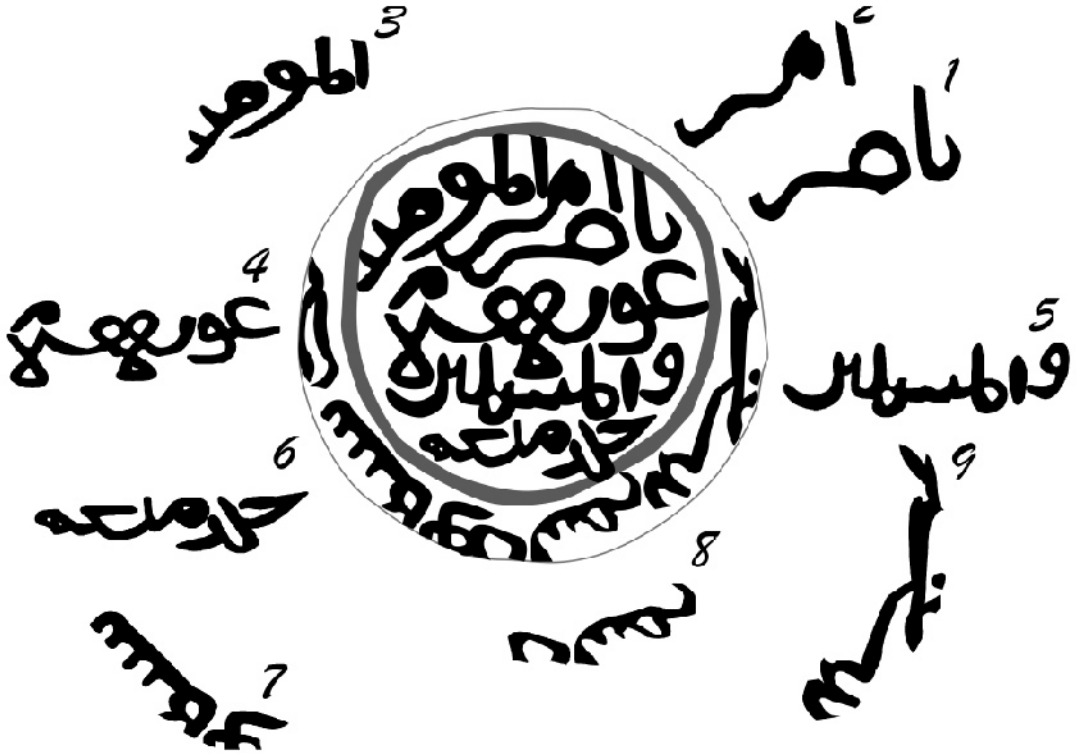
Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*ghiyāth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar a'zam shāh al-sultān ibn sikandar shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

Legend in the central field,
*nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn ghawth al-islām wa'l muslimīn khallada mulkahu*
On this coin partly visible margin shows important information like, *satgāon* as mint and 'thirteen' as date. Therefore, it is concluded that the coin was issued in the date 813.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 2 | | امر | *amīr* |
| 3 | | المومنين | *al-mu'minīn* |
| 4 | | غوث الاسلام | *ghawth al-islām* |
| 5 | | والمسلمين | *wa'l muslimīn* |
| 6 | | خلدملكه | *khallada mulkahu* |
| 7 | | ستكانو | *satkānū* (satgāon) |
| 8 | | فى سنة | *fī sanah* (date) |
| 9 | | ثلثه و عشرة | *thalathah wa 'ashrah* (thirteen) |

# SAIF AL-DĪN HAMZAH SHĀH

## (AH 813-5/CE 1410-2)

It is evident from coins of Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh, who was son of A'zam Shāh, that he did not get strong foothold in the sultānate. He managed to issue a few coins from the capital of the sultānate, Fīrūzābād. Later probably he had to leave Fīrūzābād and issued coins from Mu'azzamābād.

### Coin B-31-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq, Thuluth* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

**Obverse**

Legend in the field,
*saif al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-mujāhid hamzah shāh bin a'zam shāh bin sikandar shāh bin ilyās shāh al-sultān*

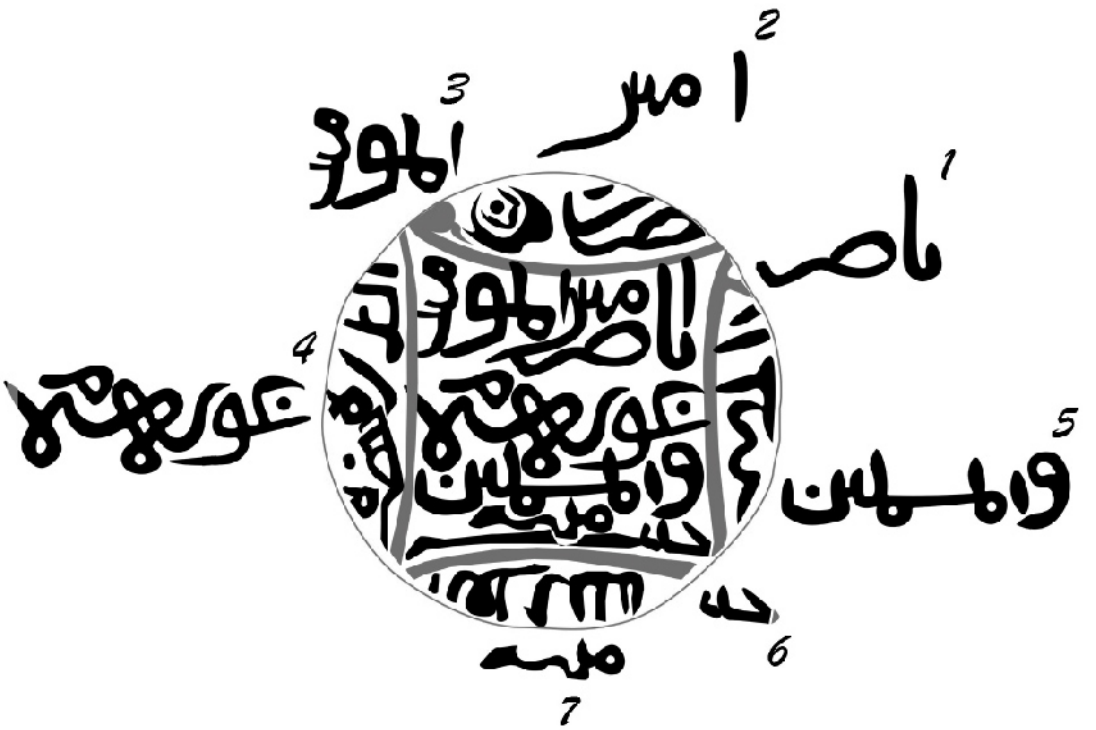
**Reverse**

Legend in the central field,
*nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn ghawth al-islām wa'l muslimīn khallada mulkahu*
On the margin
*zarb al-sikkah*
Mint: hadrat fīrūzābād
Date: 814

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | سيف | *saif* |
| 2 | | الدنيا | *al-dunyā* |
| 3 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 4 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 5 | | المجاهد | *al-mujāhid* |
| 6 | | حمزه شاه | *hamzah shāh* |
| 7 | | بن | *bin* |
| 8 | | اعظم شاه | *a'ẕam shāh* |
| 9 | | بن | *bin* |
| 10 | | سكندر | *sikandar* |
| 11 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 12 | | بن | *bin* |
| 13 | | الياس | *ilyās* |
| 14 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 15 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Central Legend**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ناصر | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 2 | امر | امر | *amīr* |
| 3 | المؤ | المومنن | *al-mu'minīn* |
| 4 | غورثه | غوث الاسلام | *ghawth al-islām* |
| 5 | والمسلمين | والمسلمن | *wa'l muslimīn* |
| 6 | خلد | خلد | *khallada* |
| 7 | ملكه | ملكه | *mulkahu* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Margin**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 2 | | السكه | *al-sikkah* |
| 3 | | بحضرة | *bī hadrat* |
| 4 | | فروزاباد | *fīrūzābād* |
| 5 | | (فی)سنه | *fī sanah (*date) |
| 6 | | ٨١٤ | 814 |

## Coin B-31-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia, Murabba al-medania* and *Naskh.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

**Obverse**

Legend in the field,
*al-mūyad bitāyiid al-rahman saif al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l mujāhid hamzah shāh ibn a'zam shāh al-sultān*

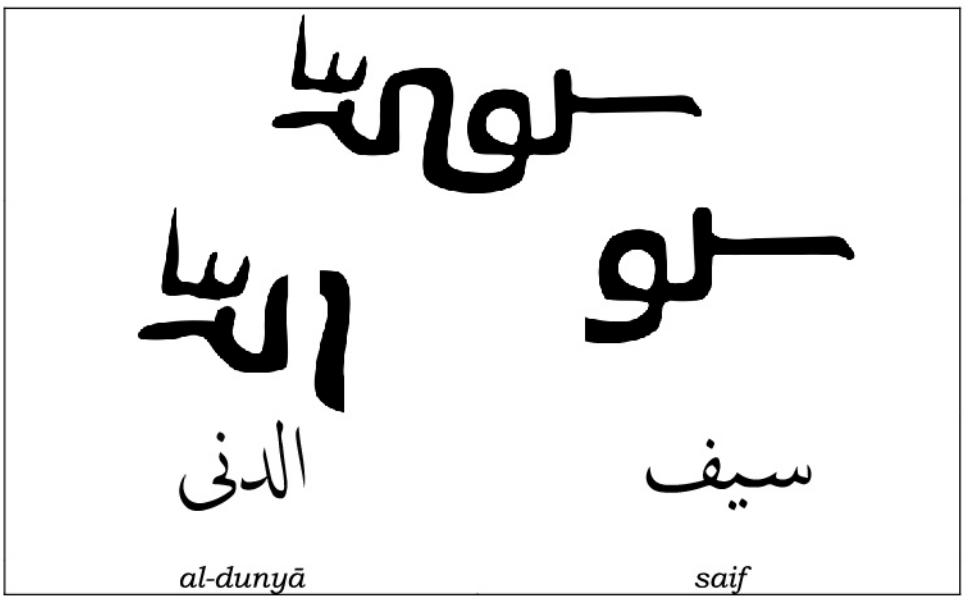
**Reverse**

Legend in the central field,
*nāsir al-islām wa'l muslimīn yamīn amīr al-mu'minīn*
Mint and date on the margin is poorly struck and not legible or could be satisfactorily retrieved.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | (الم)وعبد | *al-mūyad* |
| 2 | | بتايد | *bitāyiid* |
| 3 | | (الرح)من | *al-rahman* |
| 4 | | سيف الدنى | *saif al-dunyā* |
| 5 | | (وا)لدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 6 | | ابوالمجاهد | *abū'l mujāhid* |
| 7 | | حمزه | *hamzah* |
| 8 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 9 | | ابن | *ibn* |

Legend style of the reverse is similar to that of A'zam shāh (Muazzamabad) type. Part of obverse legend, *saif al-dunyā* (no. 4) is a complex stylized presentation of the ruler's name. Break-up of this section of the legend follows.




## SHIHĀB AL-DĪN BĀYAZĪD SHĀH

**(AH 815-7/CE 1412-4)**

Bāyazīd Shāh is known only from his coins. It is evident from his coins that, he was a usurper and did not claim himself as sultān bin sultān or a son of sultān. He, probably was a slave of Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh, whom he dethroned and Hamzah had to flee from Fīrūzābād as a consequence. In *Reaz-us-Salatin* he has been mentioned as adopted son of Hamzah Shāh. Bāyazīd Shāh could not prolong his reign due to conspiracy of Raja Ganesh who probably killed him. Bāyazīd's son 'Ala al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh replaced him in the sultānate. A coin of Shihāb al-Dīn Bāyazīd Shāh has been analyzed in this section.

### Coin B-32-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth al-me'dania* and *Naskh.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

Legend inside multi foil,
*al-mūyad bitāyiid al-rahman shihāb al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar bāyzid shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

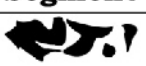
Legend inside multi foil,
*nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn ghawth al-islām wa'l muslimīn*

On the margin,
*abū bakr, umar, uthmān, 'alī, zarb firūzabād/ sanah* 816

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | الموءيد | *al-mūyad* |
| 2 | | بتايد | *bitāyiid* |
| 3 | | الرحمن | *al-rahman* |
| 4 | | شهاب | *shihāb* |
| 5 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 6 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 7 | | ابوالمظفر | *abū'l muẓaffar* |
| 8 | | بايذيد شاه | *bāyzid shāh* |
| 9 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | ابوبکر | *abū bakr* |
| 2 | | عمر | *umar* |
| 3 | | عثمان | *uthmān* |
| 4 | | علی | *'alī* |
| 5 | | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 6 | | فروز | *firūz* |
| 7 | | سنة / اباد | *abād/ sanah* |
| 8 | | ٨١٦ | 816 |

# FĪRŪZ BIN BĀYAZĪD SHĀH

## (AH 817/CE 1414)

'Ala al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh was son of Shihāb al-Dīn Bāyazīd Shāh. This ruler is also known only from his coins and had a pretty short period, probably less than a year, as sultān of Bengal. He was probably dethroned by Raja Ganesh that started a new phase in the sultānate of Bengal. A coin of 'Ala al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh has been discussed in this section.

## Coin B-33-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

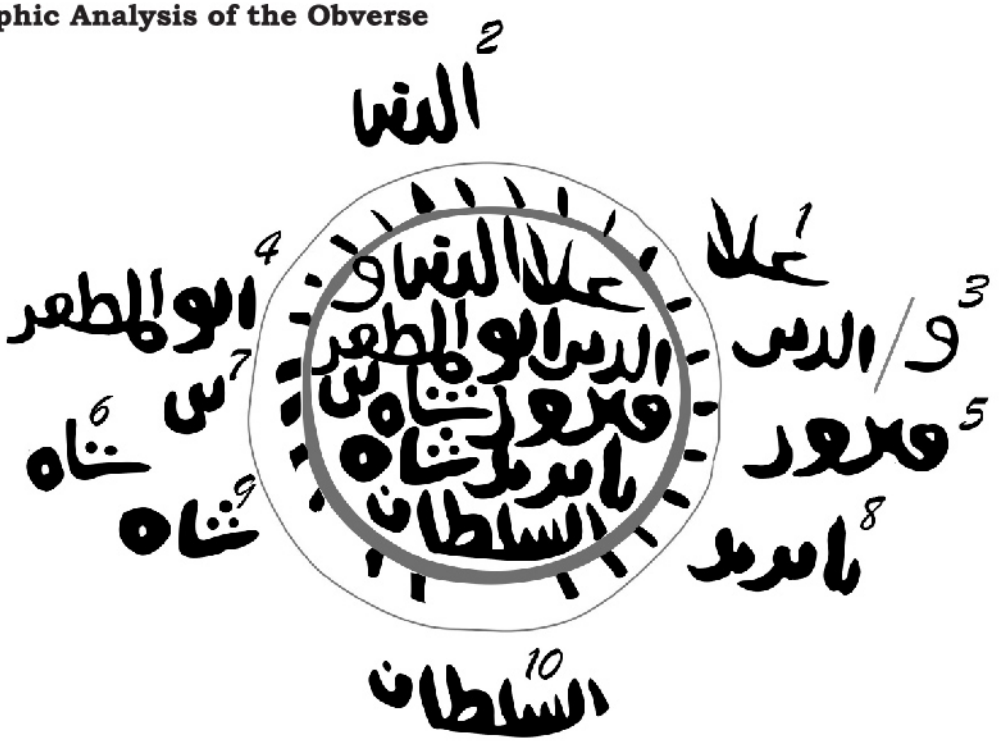
Legend inside circle,
*'ala al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar fīrūz shāh bin bāyazīd shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

Legend inside multi foil,
*nāsir amīr al-mu'minīn ghawth al-islām wa'l muslimīn*

On the margin,
*zarb fiddat fīrūzābād sanah* 817

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | علا | *‘ala* |
| 2 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 3 | | والدين | *wa’l dīn* |
| 4 | | ابوالمظفر | *abū’l muẓaffar* |
| 5 | | فيروز | *fīrūz* |
| 6 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 7 | | بن | *bin* |
| 8 | | بايزيد | *bāyazīd* |
| 9 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 10 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ضرب فضه | *zarb fiddat* |
| 2 | | فر | *fīr* |
| 3 | | وز | *ūz* |
| 4 | | اباد | *abād* |
| 2+3+4 | | فروزاباد | *fīrūzābād* |
| 5 | | سنة | *sanah* |
| 6 | | سبعة | *sab'ah* (seven) |
| 7 | | عشرة | *ashrah* (ten) |
| 8 | | و | *wa* |
| 9 | | ثما | *thama* |
| 10 | | نما | *nmia* |
| 11 | | ئة | *yah* |
| 9+10+11 | | ثمانمائة | *thamanmiayah* (eight hundred) |

# QUTB AL-DĪN A'ẒAM

Qutb al-Dīn A'ẓam was a contender of the sultānate of Bengal after the anarchy began with the death of Hamzah Shāh. As like a few earlier ones, he is known only from his coins and that was so because of the political situations of the time. It is not known much about Qutb al-Dīn A'ẓam, while only can be said that he claimed himself as sultān of Bengal. As his coins don't bear date, placing him after 'Ala al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh is arbitrary though based on style of the coins. Karim (2012) places this ephemeral ruler during AH 815-8 which falls in the anarchy that took place after Hamzah Shāh, while Goron and Goenka (2001) believes that he succeeded Ahmad Shah (AH 836-7) when there was probably another anarchy in the sultānate of Bengal.

## Coin B-34-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

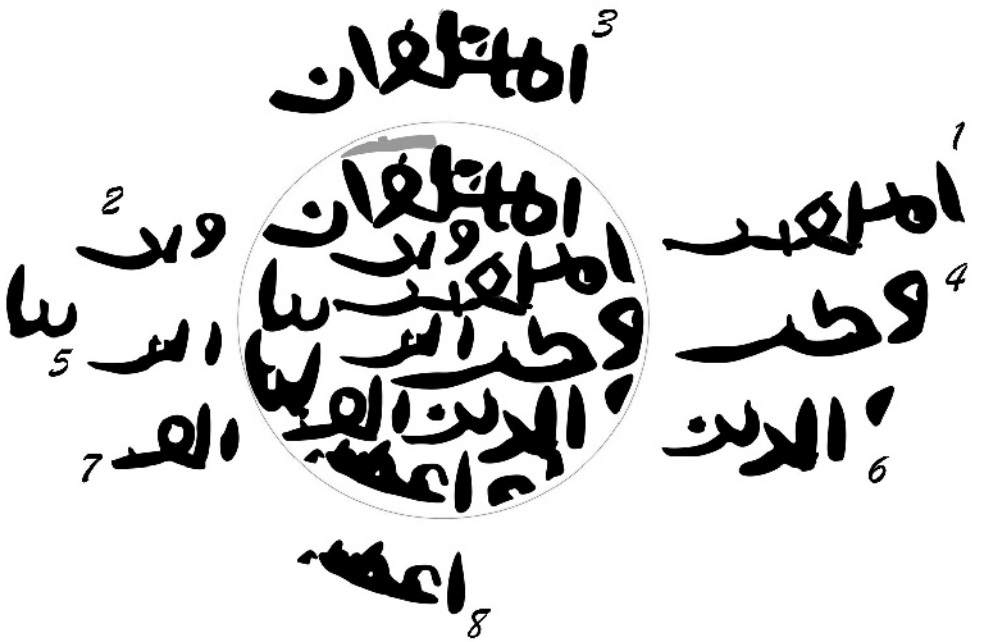
Obverse

Legend in the field,
*al-musta'īn wa'd al-must'ān qutb al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar a'ẓam (shāh) al-sultān*

Reverse

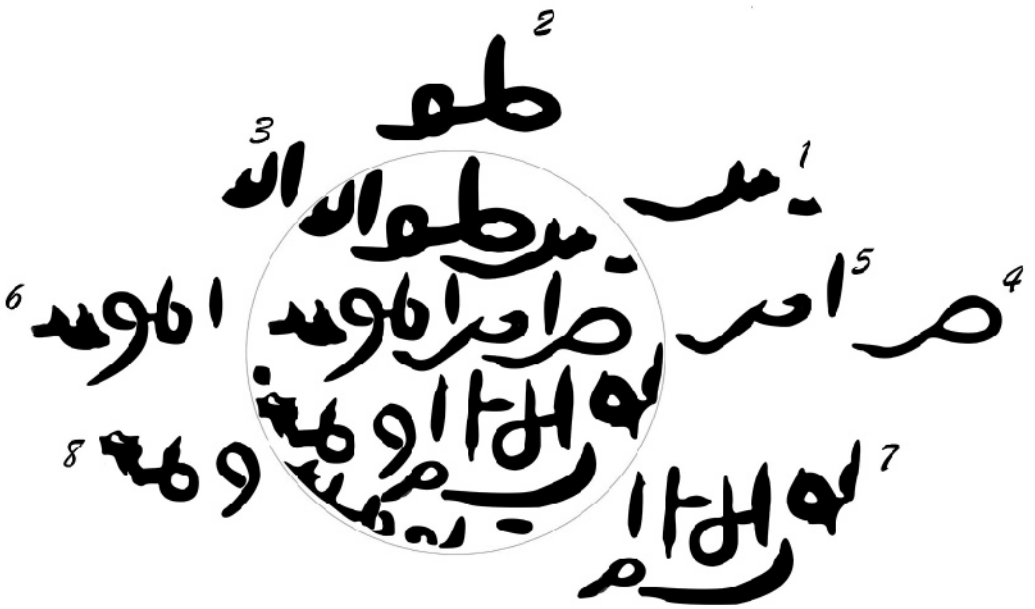
Legend in the field,
*yamīn khalīfat allāh nāsir amīr al-mū'minīn ghawth al-islām wa'l muslimīn*

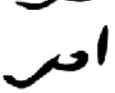
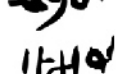
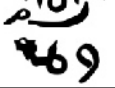
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | المستعين | *al-musta'īn* |
| 2 | | واد | *wa'd* |
| 3 | | المستعان | *al-must'ān* |
| 4 | | قطب | *qutb* |
| 5 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 6 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 7 | | ابو(المظفر) | *abū('l muẕaffar)* |
| 8 | | اعظم | *a'ẕam* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | يمين | *(ya)mīn* |
| 2 | | خليف(ة) | *(a)l-khalafa(h)* |
| 3 | | الله | *all(āh)* |
| 4 | | (نا)صر | *(nā)sir* |
| 5 |  | امير | *amīr* |
| 6 | | المومنين | *al-mū'minīn* |
| 7 |  | غوث الاسلام | *ghawth al-islām* |
| 8 |  | والمس(لمين) | *wa'l mus(limīn)* |

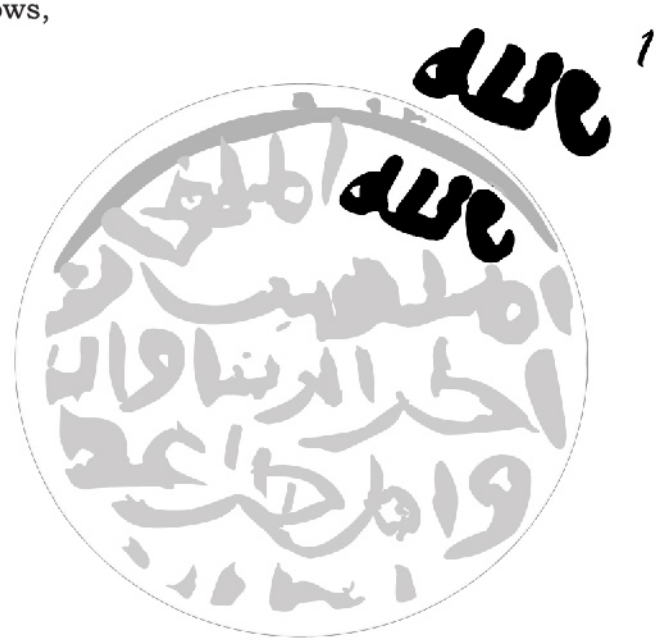
## Coin B-34-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* and *Muhaqqaq*

This coin is similar to the previous coin while slightly differs in the obverse legend. The obverse legend replaces *w'ad* with *billāh*. The full obverse legend is,
*al-musta'īn billāh al-must'ān qutb al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar a'ẓam (shāh) al-sultān*

Illustration follows,




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | بالله | *billāh* |

# SIRĀJ AL-DĪN SIKANDAR SHĀH[17]

A coin of another contender of Bengal Sultānate has been discovered recently whose name was not recorded in literature, books of history or archaeological reports before this discovery. The coin was first introduced by Md. Shariful Islam, author of the volume, on an online site World of Coins[18] and later was published by Noman Nasir and Md. Shariful Islam,[19] where the identification of the argued ruler of Bengal Sultānate has been discussed. In the said paper, the ruler was identified as Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar (?) Shāh (henceforth as Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh), though the reading of the ruler's *ism* as Sikandar was tentative, as only the initial part of it was fairly well struck up. Because the coin does not bear any date and mint, the time of proclamation of the said aspirant sultān was placed some time during the period AH 790 to 837, with the identification of the ruler being the subject of some probable conjecture.

His coin **B-35-01** is illustrated in this volume. The *laqab* of the ruler is very clear and can undoubtedly be read as *Sirāj al-Dīn,* while the *ism* cannot be seen clearly as mentioned earlier. Only the initial letter *Sin* and *Kaf* are clearly visible. The remaining letters of the name are visible but not clear enough to read the *ism* conclusively, while seems very likely *nun, dal,* and *ra.* Thus the *ism* has been read as Sikandar.

The obverse legend starts with *al-musta'in billah al-must'an,* which seems like title of the ruler presented before the *laqab* Sirāj al-Dīn.[20] The reverse legend starts with *al-musta'sim billah,* which is clearly the name of an Abbasid caliph, presumed to be the later Abbasid caliph of Cairo.[21] However, this is not conclusive. Instead, the analysis of a few historical records of that time shows a connection of Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh of the coin with Sirāj al-Dīn of the court of Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẕam Shāh; *al-musta'in billah* before the *laqab* on the obverse of the coin with the contemporary Abbasid caliph of Cairo; and *al-musta'sim billah* on the reverse of the coin with the last Abbasid caliph of Baghdad. So, in this section a few historical records are presented from the literature that may help us to explore the identity of Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh and the significance of the legends on the coin. This may lead us to think differently about a few more rulers and the history of Bengal at that time.

From a historical event discussed by Salim (1788) it is found that, the name of a judge *(Qadi)* in the court of Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh was Sirāj al-Dīn, who once pronounced a verdict against the sultān, whereupon the latter paid an indemnity to a widow for accidentally killing her only son while practising archery. In response to the sultān's comments, the judge (Sirāj al-Dīn) had the courage to retort saying 'His Majesty would have been scourged with lashes if he disobeyed the law!'.[22] This event is

[17] This finding was originally published in M.S. Islam, 'Review of Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar (?) Shāh and His Coin', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 227, 2016, pp. 27-9.
[18] www.worldofcoins .eu.
[19] N. Nāsir and M.S. Islam, op. cit., pp. 39-40.
[20] Ibid., pp. 39-40.
[21] Ibid., pp. 39-40.
[22] Salim, G.H., op. cit., pp.106-8, in M.M.Ali, op. cit., pp. 141-2.

an evidence of the fact that Sirāj al-Dīn was a powerful judge in the court of Aʿẕam Shāh.

Jayaseela Stephen mentions that Bengal during Sultānate maintained a religious and diplomatic relationship with Islamic nations, East Africa and China. Ilyās shāh negotiated for introducing cosmopolitanism for Bengal by creating a relationship of Bengal with China to Central Asian and Africa through a set of religious diplomatic and trade missions.[23]

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Aʿẕam Shāh, as a descendant of Ilyās Shāh, was a ruler who maintained good relation with the main stream of Muslim power. His benevolent deeds at the holy cities of Mecca and Medina raised his status in the eyes of the Muslim world of that time.[24] He sent gifts to these two holy cities more than once.[25] He once invited the celebrated poet of Persia, Hafiz, to help him to complete a Persian couplet and also invited him to Bengal.[26] In the year AH 814, *Al-Mustaʿin Billah Abū'l Fadl al-ʿAbbas,* the then Abbasid Caliph of Cairo received a large sum and present from Ghiyāth al-Dīn Aʿẕam Shāh.[27] His high officials would also have been involved in this act of the sultān in maintaining relations with the mainstream Muslim world. It is also very likely that Sirāj al-Dīn, as a powerful judge of his court, would have known about all these activities of Aʿẕam Shāh.

From the coins it is evident that Ghiyāth al-Dīn Aʿzam Shāh died in AH 813 (CE 1410) and that his son, Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh, reigned from AH 813 to 815 (CE 1410-2).[28] Therefore, by the year AH 814 when Caliph Al-Mustaʿin Billah received the gifts from Bengal, Aʿẕam Shāh had already died and had been succeeded by his son, Hamzah Shāh. Al-Mustaʿin Billah was the only Abbasid Caliph of Cairo who was made Sultān of Egypt in addition to the Caliphate. This took place on 25 Muharram in AH 815 (7 May 1412).[29] His short reign as sultān of Egypt has been viewed as a failed attempt at producing an Abbasid revival.[30] Thus, Al-Mustaʿin Billah received prominence among the weaker and less recognised Abbasid Caliphs of Cairo.

Bengal coins depict heavy use of Islamic legends when the then sultān was challenged by any political crisis and that used to lessen during political stability and peace. This conclusion is derived from analysis of coins of Bengal sultānate and their use of Islamic legends and components on those coins. It has been observed that use of Kalima-i-Shahāda and four caliphs of Islam- Abū Bakr, Umar, Uthmān and ʻAlī- have been extensively used in those years of a sultān when his position was somehow vulnerable. Uses of the same have been lessened in stable years. Ali (2008)[31] describes

[23] Jayaseela Stephen (ed.), *The Indian Trade at the Asian Frontier,* Gyan Publishing House, 2008. P. 18.
[24] M.M.Ali, op. cit., p. 145.
[25] Ibid., p. 143.
[26] Ibid., p. 145.
[27] As-Suyuti, J. (1881), *Tarikh al-Khulafa,* (Trans. Jarrett, H. S.), The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, p. 538
[28] Goron and Goenka, 2001, pp.178-84.
[29] J. As-Suyuti, op. cit., p. 534.
[30] P.M. Holt, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam: New Edition,* Vol. VII (Mif-Naz) (2nd ed.), 1993, p.723.
[31] A.K.M.Y. Ali, *Muslim Mudra O Hastalikhan Shilpa,* First published 1989, Book Choice, Dhaka, 2008, p.232-3.

four phases of obedience by Bengal sultāns to the Abbasid caliphs. According to him, in the second phase the Bengal sultāns started the practice of not mentioning any specific name of a caliph but showing obedience to the Abbasid Caliphate in general by adopting legends like *yamīn al-khalīfat or nāsir amīr al-mū'minīn.* This practice was caused by the fact that, during this period of the Bengal Sultānate, the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad was over, while the reinstated Abbasid Caliphate in Cairo was yet to receive legitimate acceptance from the Muslim world. This indicates that the Bengal Sultānate was aware of the doubt or confusion over the legitimacy of the caliphs of Cairo. Despite this confusion, from the evidence of the gifts sent by A'ẕam Shāh to Caliph Al-Musta'in Billah, it may be presumed that Sirāj al-Dīn continued to follow the developments in the Muslim world and he may well have learnt that Al-Musta'in Billah had been made sultān of Egypt, too.

At that time in Bengal, Shihāb al-Dīn Bāyazīd Shāh became sultān in AH 815 with the help of Raja Ganesh, who had dethroned the previous sultān Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh. As Sirāj al-Dīn had been a loyal judge of A'ẕam Shāh and his family, the dethronement of the latter's son, Hamzah Shāh, might not have been accepted and liked by him. It is presumed by Nāsir and Islam[32] that Sirāj al-Dīn fled to the east, rebelled against Bāyazīd/Raja Ganesh and tried to assert his independence using his name as Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh, but was subsequently captured and killed. Before he was killed, he managed to issue a few coins in his name and the coin that featured in the volume, was one of them.

Now, taking into consideration the then confusion in the Muslim world over the caliphate and the situation of Al-Musta'in Billah as caliph in the same year that Hamzah Shāh was killed (AH 815/ CE 1412), it has been suggested that Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh might have chosen to use the inscription on his coin to make a diplomatic move aimed at preventing the seemingly dominant Bāyazīd/Raja Ganesh alliance from receiving and retaining the support of the Muslim world. While Al-Musta'-sim Billah (AH 640-56) was the last accepted Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad whose name had been placed on the reverse of Bengal Sultānate coins, the placing of Al Musta'in Billah before the ruler's *laqab* may have been a deliberate attempt to create ambiguity in the title of the obverse, being readable as part of Sirāj al-Dīn's title while also referring to the Caliph of Cairo. It is worth mentioning that the name of Musta'sim Billah had previously been used on the coins of the Bengal Sultānate as late as the year AH 725,[33] that is almost 70 years after the death of the last Caliph of Baghdad. Subsequently, as mentioned above, the Bengal sultāns deliberately used legends like *yamīn al-khalīfat* or *nāsir amīr al-mū'minīn* because they wanted to avoid risk of confusion. It is possible that, 90 years after the previous last citation on the coins of Bengal, Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh reinstated the name of the last Caliph of Baghdad on his coins to receive the attention and support of that segment of the Muslim world who were favoring the return of the Caliphate of Baghdad. At the same time he may have deliberately and ambiguously placed the name of Al-Musta'in Billah, the then Caliph of Cairo, before his *laqab* to receive support from the contemporary Caliph.

[32] N. Nāsir and M.S. Islam, op. cit., p.40.
[33] Ibid., p.40.

As there is no other evidence relating to Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh, for providing conjecture, we have to depend upon what is presented on his available single and enigmatic coin. From this coin and what historical records we have, there could well be a link between Sirāj al-Dīn, who was the judge at the court of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Aʿẕam Shāh, Aʿzam Shāh's relations with the Muslim world at large and with Caliph Al-Mustaʿin Billah of Cairo, the reaction within the Cairo Caliphate when Aʿẕam Shāh's son was dethroned by a usurper, and the titles used on the coin of Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh. While this is necessarily somewhat speculative, it can be suggested at this stage that Sirāj al-Dīn, the judge at the court of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Aʿẕam Shāh, probably declared himself sultān after Hamzah Shāh was killed, as presumed by Nāsir and Islam (2014) in their paper; and that Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh may have used the name of the last Caliph of Baghdad, Al-Mustaʿsim Billah on the reverse and ambiguously placed the name of the Caliph of Cairo, Al-Mustaʿin Billah, as a diplomatic move to attract the attention and receive the political support of a segment of the Muslim world.

## Coin B-35-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Naskh*

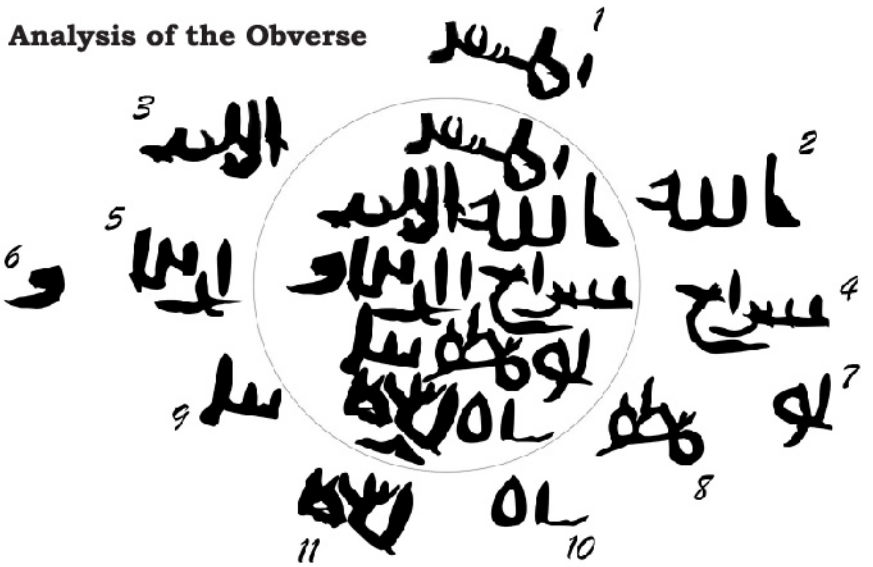
**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

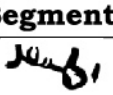
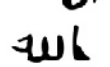
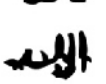
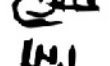
Legend in the field,
*al-mustaʿīn billāh al-mustʿan sirāj al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẕaffar sikandar shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

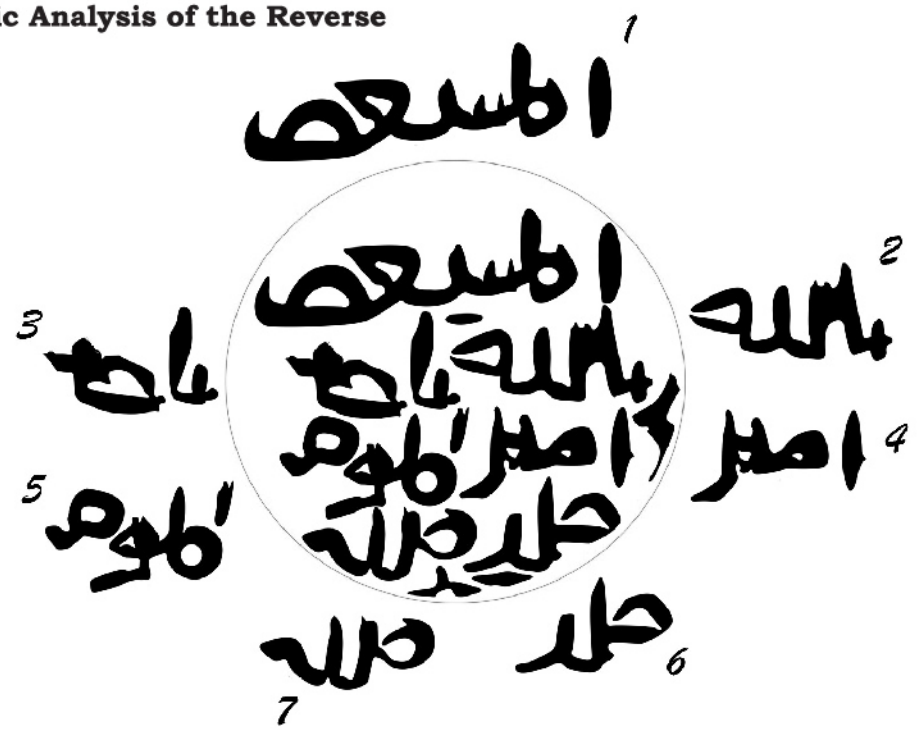
Legend in the field,
*al-musta'sim billāh nāsir amīr al-mū'minīn khallada mulkahu*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | المستعين | *al-musta'īn* |
| 2 |  | بالله | *billāh* |
| 3 |  | المستعان | *al-must'an* |
| 4 | | سراج | *sirāj* |
| 5 |  | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 6 | | و(الدين) | *wa(al-dīn)* |
| 7 | | ابو(ا) | *a(bū)* |
| 8 | | (ال)مظفر | *(al)-muẕaffar* |
| 9 | | سك(ندر) | *sika(ndar)* |
| 10 | | ساه | *shāh* |
| 11 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | المتعصم | *al-musta'sim* |
| 2 | | بالله | *billah* |
| 3 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 4 | | امير | *amīr* |
| 5 | | المومنين | *al-mū'minīn* |
| 6 | | خلد | *khallada* |
| 7 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |

## NĀSIR AL-DĪN MUHAMMAD SHĀH[34]

Goron and Goenka (2001) tentatively placed a coin preserved in the State Archaeological Museum, Calcutta[35] bearing the legend *nāsir al-dunyā wa al-dīn abū nasr mahmūd or muhammad al-sultān* under the list of coins of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (AH 832; 837-64). The ruler's *ism* was not clear but it was noted that his *kunya, abū nasr,* did not occur on any known coin of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd, or of any other Bengal sultān except for the coins of Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar some 50 years later.

[34] Originally published in S. Goron, M.S. Islam and M.M. Hossain, 'A Coin Reconfirming Nāsir al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh as Sultān of Bengal', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 230, 2017, pp. 31-2.

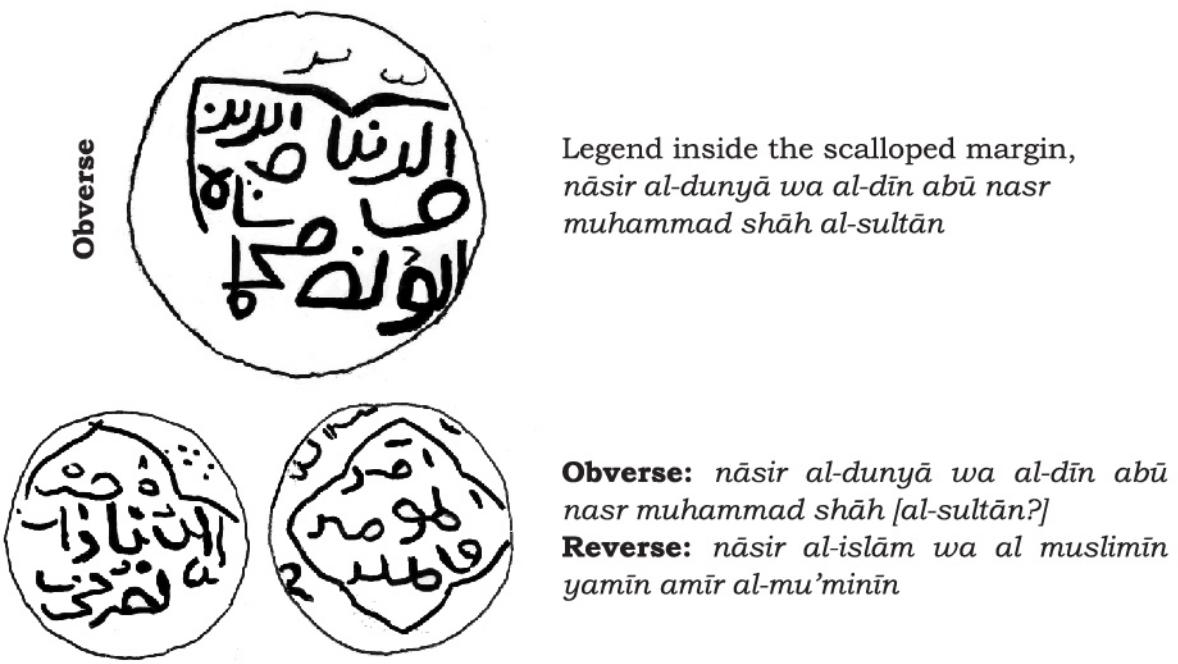
[35] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., coin ref. B 472, p. 208.

In due course, another specimen was identified and published by Noman Nāsir, Nicholas Rhodes and JP Goenka (2010),[36] which was different in type but with the same legends on the obverse. The obverse legend included the *kunya, abū nasr,* and was clear enough to determine that the ruler's *ism* was Muhammad and not Mahmūd. Since neither coin had such key information as the mint and date, the authors tentatively identified the ruler as a previously unknown sultān of Bengal during a period of political turmoil in Bengal. Based on the style of lettering and other features, the coins were deemed to be of Mu'azzamabad type and dated to sometimes later than Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh (AH 792-813/CE 1389-1410) or Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh (AH 813-5/CE 1410-2).

## Coin B-36-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Obverse of the Coin**

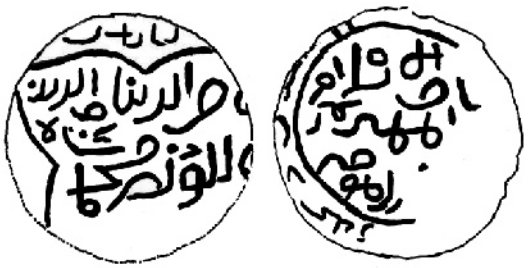



Legend inside the scalloped margin,
*nāsir al-dunyā wa al-dīn abū nasr muhammad shāh al-sultān*

**Obverse:** *nāsir al-dunyā wa al-dīn abū nasr muhammad shāh [al-sultān?]*
**Reverse:** *nāsir al-islām wa al muslimīn yamīn amīr al-mu'minīn*

**Figure 5.1: Drawing of the Coin Published by Goron and Goenka (2001)[37]**

[36] N. Nāsir, N. Rhodes and J.P. Goenka, 'Nāsir al Dīn Muhammad, Sultān (?) of Bengal', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 205, 2010, p. 21.
[37] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B472, p. 208.



**Obverse:** *nāsir al-dunyā wa al-dīn abū nasr muhammad shāh [al-sultān?]*
**Reverse:** *nāsir al-islām wa al muslimīn yamīn amīr al-mu'minīn*

**Figure 5.2: Drawing of the Coin Published by Nasir et al. (2010)[38]**

**B-36-01** presents a third coin that is same type as the one published by Nasir, Rhodes and Goenka (2010) while the coin published by Goron and Goenka (2001) is a different type. The two types differ in shape of the obverse cartouche containing the ruler's titles and the layout of the obverse legend within the cartouches. Unfortunately, the reverse of the coin **B-36-01** has been so defaced by chisel marks as to make the legend illegible. Nasir, Rhodes and Goenka (2010) tentatively read this side meaning 'Helper of Islam and Muslims, the right hand of the commander of the faithful'. Despite poor condition of the third coin's reverse, it is nonetheless important in demonstrating that the two coins were struck from different dies. This is shown in figure 5.3 where the drawing of the coin **B-36-01** is in black and that of Nasir, Rhodes and Goenka (2010) in gray. Using the legend sections *'al-dīn'* at the top left and *'abū nasr'* at the bottom right as reference points, when the two drawings are overlaid it can be seen that the other parts of the legend do not match appositionally.

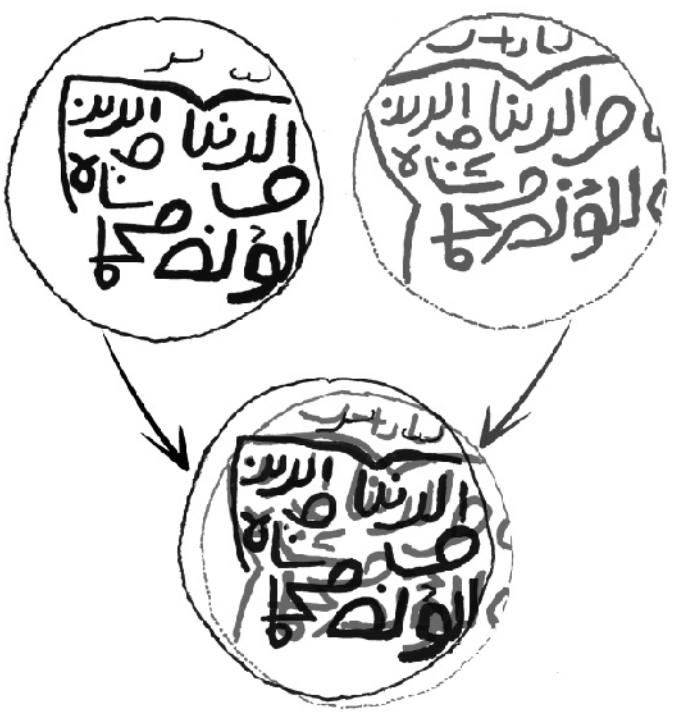


**Figure 5.3: Comparison of Obverse Drawings**

[38] N. Nāsir, N. Rhodes and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 21.

This observation has implications such as, it reconfirms the ism of the ruler as Muhammad Shāh. As it is the third specimen with the same title, it can be concluded that the *ism* Muhammad Shāh is not the result of a die engraver's error but that Nāsir al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh was, indeed, a coin-issuing authority in Bengal. As it is observed that, in Bengal at that period, coins were issued only by sultāns or usurpers, it can be assumed that, he was an otherwise unreported sultān of at least a part of Bengal Sultānate for presumably a short time.

CHAPTER 6

# HOUSE OF RAJA GANESH

Raja Ganesh (CE 1416-18), by his shrewd politics, killed Bāyazīd Shāh and then Fīrūz Shāh and captured the Sultānate of Bengal.[1] But he failed to become the king as he failed to manage the Muslim influence in the region. He had to convert his son *Jadu* to Muslim for retaining power. *Jadu* took the name Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh after converting to Muslim and ascended the throne of Bengal in CE 1415. But this reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad did not last long as Raja Ganesh seized power from him in CE 1416. Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh became sultān of Bengal again after Raja Ganesh's death in CE 1418 and continued until CE 1432. For a short time between Raja Ganesh and Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad there had been reign of Mahendra, who was probably another son of Raja Ganesh. Shams al-Dīn Ahmad Shāh, son of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh, had a short reign (CE 1432-1433) before the sultānate of Bengal went into the second phase of Ilyās Shāhī dynasty.

| **Serial No.** | **Name of the Coin Issuing Authority** | **Reign** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 37 | Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh (s/o Danuja Marddana) | 818-9; 821-36 | 1415-6; 1418-32 |
| 38 | Danuja Marddana Deva/ Raja Ganesh (se 1339-40) | 819-21 | 1416-8 |
| 39 | Mahendra Deva (s/o Danuja Marddana, se 1340) | 821 | 1418 |
| 40 | Shams al-Dīn Ahmad Shāh (s/o Jalal al-Dīn Muhammad) | 836-7 | 1432-3 |
| 41 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh | 837 | 1433-4? |
| 42 | Nāsir al-Dīn Shahim Shāh | 837? | 1433-4? |

[1] M.M. Ali, op. cit., pp. 149-164; The view of Ali has been opposed by S.J. Sarkar, (ed.),op. cit., in his 'Modern reconstruction of the history of Ganesh and his sons', p. 125.

# JALĀL AL-DĪN MUHAMMAD SHĀH

## (AH 818-9; 821-36/CE 1415-6; 1418-32)

Reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh is divided into two phases, the first one was started in the year AH 818 (CE 1415) and the second one in AH 821 (CE 1418). As mentioned earlier, his original name was Jadu and was converted to Muslim by his father Raja Ganesh. Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh introduced lion motif on his coins that has been regarded as one of the most attractive series in the coinage of Bengal sultānate. He also introduced tughra style of calligraphy on his coins that was also for the first time on coinage of Bengal Sultānate.

**Coin B-37-01** **Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

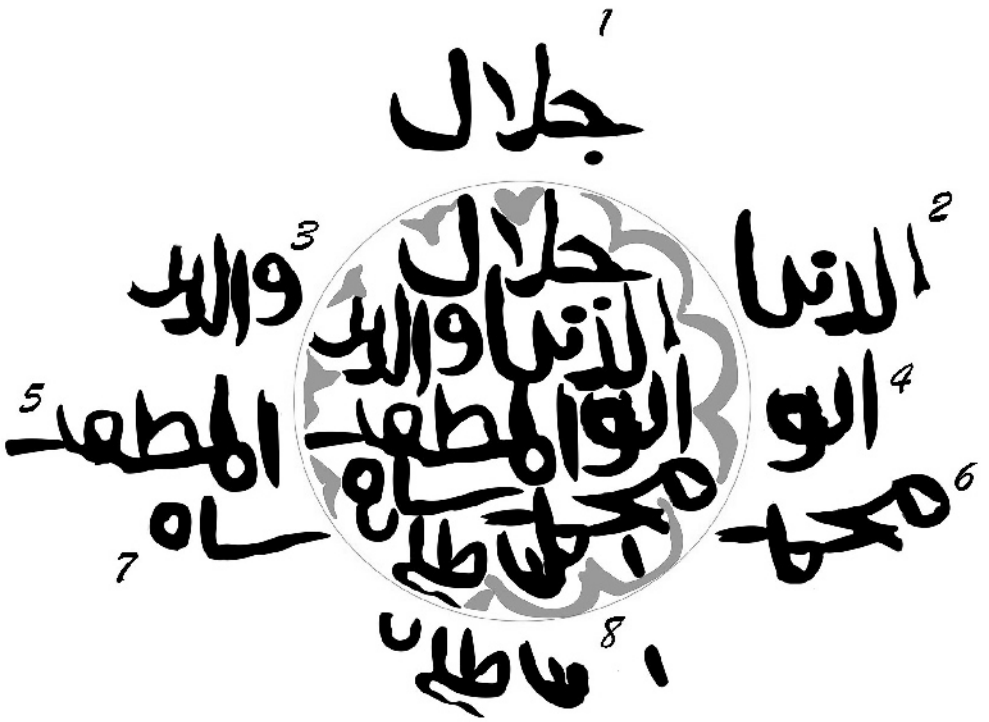
**Obverse**

Legend inside the scalloped margin,
*jalāl al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar muhammad shāh al-sultān*

**Reverse**

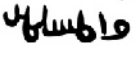
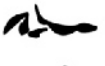
Legend inside the margin,
*nāsir al-islām wa'l muslimīn khallada mulkahu*
Date: 818

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | جلال | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 2 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 3 | والدين | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 4 | ابو | ابو | *abū'l* |
| 5 | المظفر | المظفر | *muẓaffar* |
| 6 | محمد | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 7 | شاه | شاه | *shāh* |
| 8 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 2 | | الاسلام | *al-islām* |
| 3 |  | والمسلمين | *wa'l muslimīn* |
| 4 | | خلد | *khallada* |
| 5 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 6 |  | سنه | *sanah* |
| 7 | | ٨١٨ | *818* |

## Coin B-37-02

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

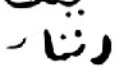
Obverse

Short legend above the lion
*nar/kīsan/abtār*

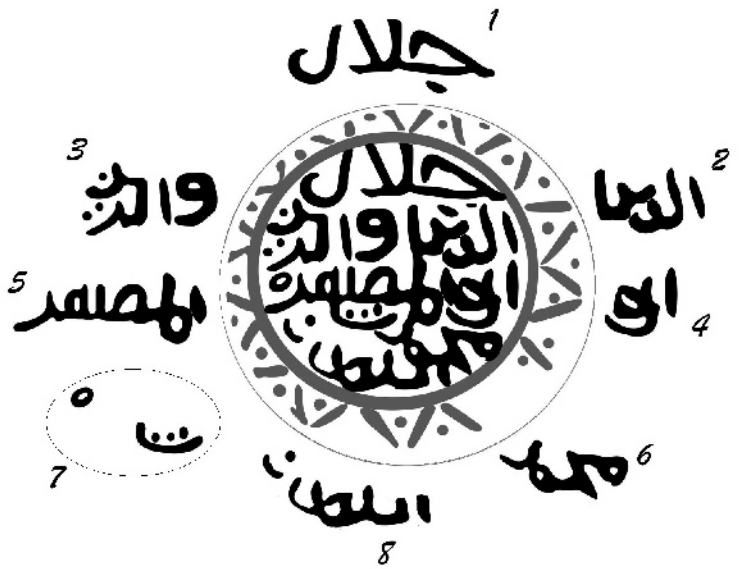
Reverse

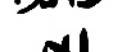
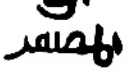
Legend in the central field,
*jalāl al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar muhammad shāh al-sultān*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | نر | *nar* |
| 2 | | كيسن | *kīsan* |
| 3 |  | ابتار | *abtār* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 2 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 3 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 4 |  | ابو | *abū* |
| 5 |  | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 6 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 7 | | ساه | *shāh* |
| 8 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

## Muhammad's Lion Motif and Diplomatic Connection

Numismatists present two different theories on objective of introducing lion motif on this series of coin by Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad.[2] One theory argues that lion motif coins of Muhammad were issued on the occasion of visit of Chinese ambassador in Bengal.[3] Another theory believes that the sultān issued this coin to commemorate the withdrawal of soldiers of Ibrahim Shāh of Jaunpur from Bengal outskirt.[4] A less likely relation of the coin has been argued in another claim that, this coin was issued by Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad after capturing a part of neighboring kingdom of Tripura for circulating that series of coin where coins commonly bear the lion motif.[5] This argument is less likely plausible because, Tripura Kingdom actually started to use lion motif later than the date of issue of this series of coin of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad. Whatever the original cause of issuing this series of coin was, an interesting feature of the coin is the short inscription or legend above the lion on the obverse. Again, there is controversy among numismatists in the reading of the inscription. It has been alternatively read as either *bin ganesh abtar* (son of the avater of Ganesh) or *narakishan abtar* (the avater of Narakrishna). The authors of this volume believe that the second reading is more accurate. The image presented under **Coin B-37-02**[6] clearly shows 'kaf' + 'sin' + 'noon' forming the *kīsan.* The full legend above the lion on this coin should be *nar kīsan abtār.* Though date of this issue is not possible to know from this or known one tanka specimens of the series, on a ten tanka specimen date is inscribed as AH 824. It is concluded that this series of lion tanka has been issued on that date or followed proximate dates which fall in the earlier part of second reign of Jalāl al-Dīn-Muhammad. The authors of this book want to place a connection of inclusion of the lion motif and the legend above the lion on this side with Muhammad's intention to capture support from his Hindu origin segment. It has been discussed earlier that Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad was converted to Muslim as part of Raja Ganesh's compromised effort to keep his family in power of Bengal Sultānate.[7] But at suitable time (in the year AH 819) Raja Ganesh removed Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad from the sultānate, while the later toppled Raja Ganesh and/or his Hindu successor Mahendra Deva in the year AH 821 and regained position back as sultān of Bengal. It has been argued that Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad did not go back to his original religion Hinduism and remained as Muslim.[8]

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[2] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 190-1.

[3] G.S. Farid, 'A new and unique ten tankah commemorative coin of Jalaluddin Mohammad Shāh of Bengal (818-837 AH)', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India,* Vol. 38, 1976, pp. 88-95.

[4] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 191.

[5] R.M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier,* 1204-1760, 1993, University of California Press, California, p.58.

[6] Also see S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., B342, p. 193.

[7] M.S. Islam, 'Power Politics in the Governance of Bengal Sultānate', in A. Farazmand (ed.), *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy and Governance,* Springer International Publishing, Switzerland, 2016, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_2486-1.

[8] Ibid.

It is not unlikely that the conflict of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad with his father Raja Ganesh and/or Brother Mahendra Deva and his stand to permanently leaving his religion may have thrown him in negative relations with his original Hindu family, relatives and officials. According to Richard Maxwell Eaton, at the time of his ascending to the throne he was surrounded by rebellious Hindus in the interior and cautious Muslim elites in the capital.[9] As a result, probably there was urgency felt by him to satisfy the both. Contemporary Muslim elites as being the stronger counterpart, Muhammad may have 'sought to legitimize his rule by publicly displaying his credentials as a devout and correct Muslim'.[10] He not only wanted support from local Muslim elites but also from central part of Islamic caliphate. As for example, once he requested Sultān Ashraf Barsbay, the most prestigious Mamluk ruler of Egypt at his time, to bless him with a letter of recognition.[11] In response Sultān Ashraf Barsbay sent Muhammad a robe of honour and the letter of recognition. On the other hand Muhammad may have maintained some efforts to satisfy his original Hindu 'rebellious' family members. As a result, it is not unlikely that, in this coin Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad called himself as the avater of *Narakrishna* but also innovatively introduced the lion motif as a Hindu religious connection. Intentionally or by coincidence the lion is the *vahana* or vehicle of the goddess Durga.[12] The authors of the volume believe that, this coin was an innovative diplomatic effort of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad to gain support from Hindu segments that he was originated from. According to Richard Maxwell Eaton, through this coin the sultān was sending different messages to different constituencies in his kingdom.[13] On the reverse of the coin the sultān's title is *jalāl al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar muhammad shāh al-sultān.* Therefore, the coin used Arabic legend probably to satisfy Muslim segments and put some messages on the obverse likely in disguise that was intended to satisfy the Hindu segment.[14]

**Coin B-37-03** **Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Tughra al-Bangalia, Naskh* and *Thuluth*

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[9] R.M. Eaton, op. cit., p.56.
[10] Ibid., p.57
[11] Ibid., p.57
[12] Rhodes, N.G. and S.K. Bose, *The Coinage of Tripura,* Library of Numismatic Studies, Kolkata, 2002, p. 9; A.N. Lahiri, Tripura Coins of Iconographic Interest, *Journal of the Numismatic Society,* vol. 29, 1967, pp. 73-5.
[13] Richard Maxwell Eaton, op. cit., p.60.
[14] The author supports arguments placed by Richard Maxwell Eaton (pp. 58-60) regarding the motive of this coin except that Eaton reads the obverse legend above the lion as *'bin kans rao'* while the author of the book reads the legend as *'narakishan avatar'.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

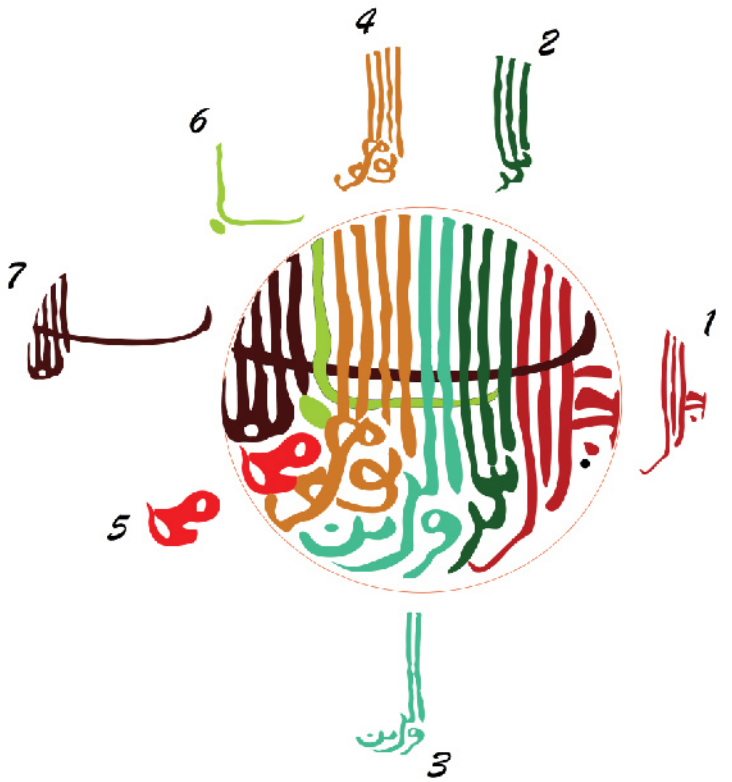
Legend is,
*jalāl al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar muhammad shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

Shahāda in the central field,
Mint: Fīrūzabād
Date: 829 (?)

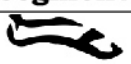
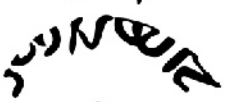
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

The obverse of this particular coin is in *tughra* style and that seems pretty complex in deciphering. The alphabets are complex in arrangement and are difficult to decipher using single color. That's why only for *tughra* type coins multiple colors have been used for segregating and presenting the legend.




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 2 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 3 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 4 | | ابو المظفر | *abū al-muẓaffar* |
| 5 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 6 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 7 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Margin**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 2 | | هذه | *hazihi* |
| 3 | | السكه | *al-sikkah* |
| 4 |  | فى الفروزاباد | *fi al-fīrūzābād* |
| 5 | | سنه | *sanah* |
| 6 | | ٨٢٩ (?) | *829 (?)* |

## Coin B-37-04

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Tughra al-Bangalia, Naskh* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

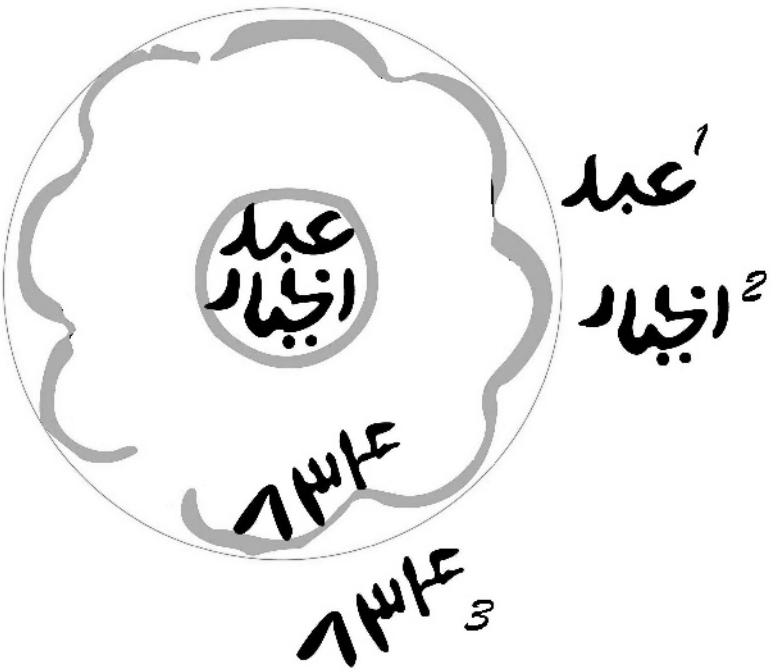
Legend inside scalloped border,
*jalāl al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar muhammad shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

Extraordinary design surrounding the central legend *'abd al-jabbār*

Date: 834

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | عبد | عبد | *'abd* |
| 2 | الجبار | الجبار | *al-jabbār* |
| 3 | ٨٣٤ | ٨٣٤ | *834* |

Because of the dot *(nokta)* above *al-jabbār,* it can be alternatively read as *al-khaiyar,* which can be the *sifat* name of Allāh Rabb'ul al-Amin. *Khaiyar* means the most superior. But in calligraphy there is practice of presenting *jazam* by dot. In that case it is more appropriate to read this section as *al-jabbār* (the supreme power).

# RAJA GANESH

## (SE 1339-40/CE 1416-8)

A controversial character of the sultānate period in Bengal is Raja Ganesh. In a crucial period of Bengal Sultānate, Hindu Raja Ganesh wanted to seize power of Bengal from Muslim rulers. Later he had to convert his son to Muslim. This part of history of Bengal remains enigmatic as modern historians are divided in presenting the role of Raja Ganesh. A group presents him as wicked, while another group depicts him as a clean character. Here also history of Bengal depends on numismatic evidences and stone inscriptions.

According to *Reaz-us-Salatin,*[15] Raja Ganesh conspired in killing Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẕam Shāh. His able minister Khan-i-Jahan Yahya was also murdered shortly after death of the sultān (A'ẕam Shāh), which brought Raja Ganesh in the forefront of the struggle of power.[16] That may also indicate that there might be active role of Raja Ganesh in the killing of Khan-i-Jahan. After death of Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẕam shāh, his son Saif al-Dīn Hamzah Shāh (CE 1410-2/AH 813-5) was murdered, which was followed by assassination of usurper Shihab al-Dīn Bāyazīd Shāh (CE 1412-4/AH 815-7), who was a slave of Hamzah Shāh, and Bāyazīd's son 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (CE 1414/AH 817) who wanted to overpower Raja Ganesh in the struggle of power in Bengal Sultānate. According to historians of Bengal Sultānate, Raja Ganesh had role in conspiring all these subsequent murders.[17]

Though it was assumed that Raja Ganesh ensured full control after assassination 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh, it was evident from analysis of a few coins of Qutb al-Dīn A'ẕam Shāh and a single specimen of coin of Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh, discussed in the previous chapter, that struggle of power was continued between Raja Ganesh and other contestants even after 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh bin Bāyazīd.[18] Qutb al-Dīn A'ẕam Shāh and Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh were also killed by Raja Ganesh or Shihab al-Dīn Bāyazīd Shāh. Probably after all these, Raja Ganesh finally got ultimate supremacy in Bengal.

After securing his power in Bengal, Raja Ganesh continued elimination and persecution upon the Muslims.[19] According to *Reaz-us-Salatin* Raja Ganesh continued oppression over and bloodshed of Muslims to make his power more secured.[20] He killed many Muslims and Sufis or scholars of that time. Muslim scholar Shaikh Badr al- Islam and his son Farid al-Islam was killed by Ganesh as they persistently refused to acknowledge his supremacy in Bengal.[21] It is claimed that Raja Ganesh conspired to kill a large number of Muslim scholars by ordering drowning a boat, where Muslim scholars were on board.[22] He also demolished mosques and massacred Islamic establishments.

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[15] G.H. Salim, Reaz-us-Salatin (1788), 1st edn. (Translated as Banglar Itihas, Abosar, Dhaka, 2008), pp. 59-71.
[16] M.M.Ali, op. cit., pp. 120-164.
[17] G. H. Salim, op. cit., pp. 59-71; M. M. Ali, op. cit., pp. 120-164.
[18] M.S. Islam, 2016, op. cit.
[19] M.M. Ali, op. cit., pp. 120-64.
[20] G.H. Salim, op. cit., pp. 59-71.
[21] Ibid.; M. M. Ali, op. cit., pp. 120-164; H. Blochmann, op. cit., pp. 63-4.
[22] G. H. Salim, op. cit., pp. 59-71; H. Blochmann, op. cit., pp. 63-4.

All these oppressions by Raja Ganesh led Nūr Qutb al-Alam, the leading Muslim scholar (Shaikh) of the time to invite neighboring Jaunpur Sultān, Ibrahim Shāh Sarqi, to invade Bengal. A truce was reached after Raja Ganesh submitted to Nūr Qutb al-Alam. Shaikh took this opportunity and agreed to accept the proposal of truce on the condition of his conversion to Islam. Raja Ganesh saved his religion by offering his elder son, *Jatmal Jadu,* to convert to Islam and enthroning him as sultān of Bengal. Nūr Qutb al-Alam accepted this proposal, converted *Jadu* to Islam and gave him a Muslim name Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh.[23] After that Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh was placed on the throne of Bengal Sultānate (CE 1415-6/AH 818-9 as his first reign) as was negotiated between the two parties. On this event, Ibrahim Shāh of Jaunpur Sultānate ordered withdrawal of his force from border of Bengal. Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh issued a series of coins on his first reign.[24]

Nūr Qutb al-Alam died in CE 1416/AH 819. Raja Ganesh was probably waiting for this time and immediately after that he dethroned his son Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh and declared himself as Raja of Bengal taking the title *śrī śrī danuja (danwaj) marddana deva.* He ruled Bengal from CE 1416/AH 819 to CE 1418/AH 821 (Saka 1339-40) and introduced a new series of coins with Bengali inscriptions. He replaced Islamic religious legends with Hindu religious legends. In addition to this, he introduced Sakabda (Saka) dates on his coins replacing hijri calendar dates.[25]

It is said earlier that on his coins Raja Ganesh took the title *danuja (danwaj) marddana deva.* On the obverse of the coin at the center within a multi foil the Bangla inscription has been read as *śrī śrī danuja (danwaj) marddana deva.* On the reverse of the coin Raja Ganesh introduced religious legends showing respect to *śrī chandi,* a name of Hindu goddess Durga. The inscriptions at the center of these coins have been read as *śrī chandi charana parayana* that has been translated as 'obedience to the feet of *śrī chandi.'* Margin of the reverse bears the date and mint of the coin.

Raja Ganesh died in CE 1418/AH 821. After death of Raja Ganesh in CE 1418/AH 821, probably his younger Hindu son Mahendra Deva became Raja of Bengal for a short period of time (CE 1418/AH 821/Saka 1340). His coins continued to bear the Hindu legends as introduced by his father Raja Ganesh.[26] He was later dethroned by supporters of his elder Muslim brother Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh who was raised as sultān of Bengal for the second time after this event in CE 1418/AH 821. The second reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh brought into stability in Bengal Sultānate, which lasted for a significantly longer period of time. He ruled Bengal till CE 1432/AH 836 and issued a number of various types of coins.[27] During this reign of Muhammad Shāh till AH 836 there was probably a short disturbance from Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh that has been discussed in later part in this volume.

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[23] Blochmann, op. cit., p. 61.
[24] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit. B305-10, pp. 188-9.
[25] Ibid., B315-20A, pp. 189-90.
[26] Ibid., B321-23, p. 190.
[27] Ibid., B325-83, pp. 191-6.

## Coin B-38-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Proto Bangla* (Medieval Bengali)

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

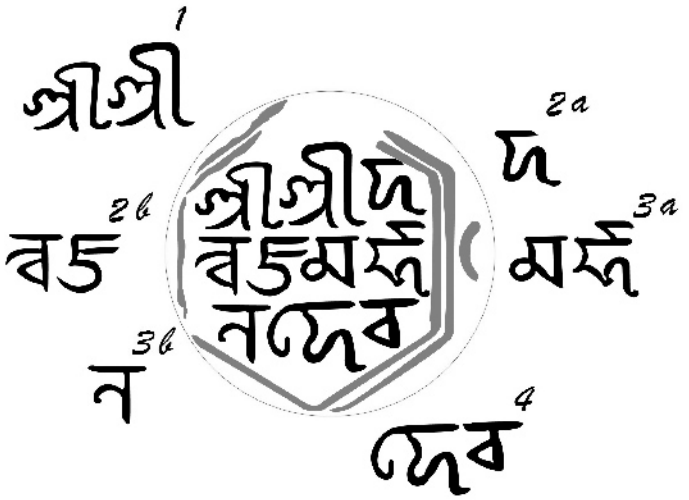
Legend in the central field,
*śrī śrī danwaj marddana dev*

Reverse

Legend in the central field,
*śrī chandī charana parayana*

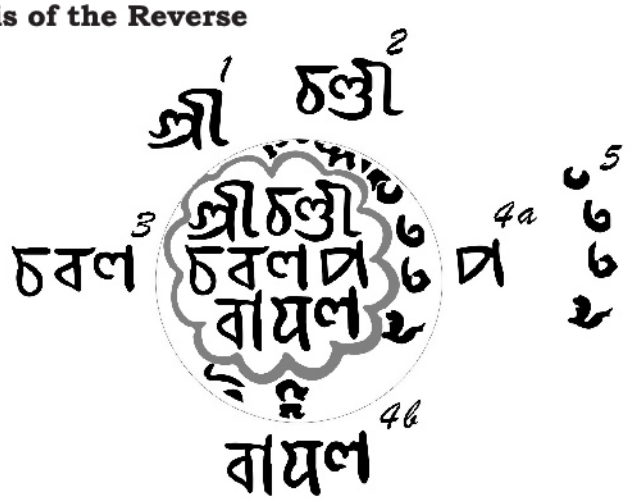
Mint: off flan
Date: 1339 in śaka

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | শ্রীশ্রী | শ্রী শ্রী | *śrī śrī* |
| 2 (a&b) | দ/নুজ | দ/নুজ | *Da/nwaj* (Danuja) |
| 3 (a&b) | মর্দ্দ/ন | মর্দ্দ/ন | *Mardda/na* |
| 4 | দেব | দেব | *dev* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | শ্রী | শ্রী | *śrī* |
| 2 | চণ্ডী | চণ্ডী | *chandī* |
| 3 | চরণ | চরণ | *charana* |
| 4 (a&b) | প/রায়ণ | প/রায়ণ | *p/arayana* |
| 5 | ১৩৩৯ | ১৩৩৯ | *1339* |

# MAHENDRA DEV

## (SE 1340/CE 1418)

As Mahendra is known only from his coins, it is not clear who he was, while he had a pretty short period of reign over Bengal. Some argues that he was Jadu, alias Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh who may have issued this coin's series after he had effort back to his original Hindu religion in sometime after death of Nūr Qutb al Alam. In another group's belief, he was sibling of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh. A coin of Mahendra Dev has been analyzed in this section.

## Coin B-39-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *proto bangla* (Medieval Bengali)

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

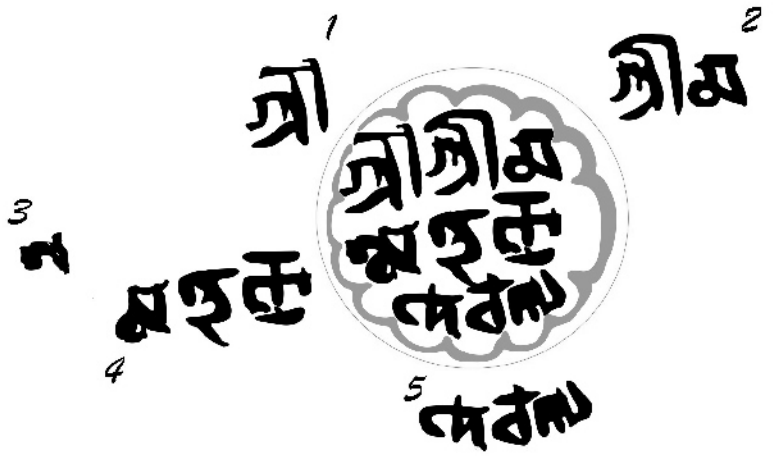
Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*śrī śrīman mahendra devasya*

Reverse

Legend in the central field,
*śrī chandī charana parāyana*
Date: 1340 (śaka)

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | শ্রী | শ্রী | *śrī* |
| 2&3 | শ্রীম/ন | শ্রীম/ন | *śrīma/n* |
| 4 | মহেন্দ্র | মহেন্দ্র | *mahendra* |
| 5 | দেবস্য | দেবস্য | *devasya* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | শ্রী | শ্রী | *śrī* |
| 2 | চণ্ডী | চণ্ডী | *chandī* |
| 3 | চরণ | চরণ | *charana* |
| 4&5 | প/রায়ণ | প/রায়ণ | *pa/rāyana* |

# SHAMS AL- DĪN AHMAD SHĀH

## (AH 836-7/CE 1432-3)

Shams al- Dīn Ahmad Shāh was son of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh. He was not a capable ruler and had a very short period in the throne of Bengal sultānate. According to *Reaz-us-Salatin,* he was killed by his slaves Shādi Khan and Nāsir Khan[28] that created anarchy in this region.

**Coin B-40-01** **Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* and *Muhaqqaq*

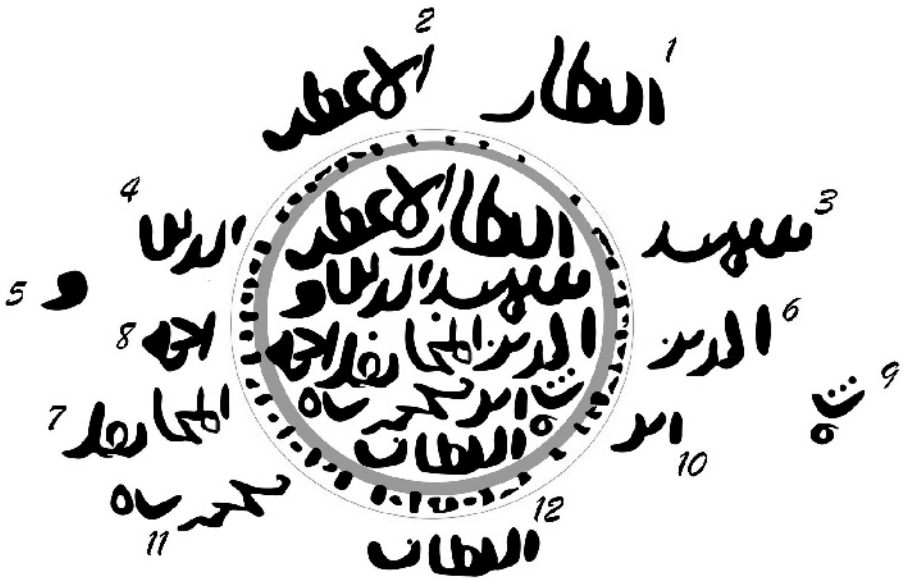
**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Legend in the central field,
*al-sultān al-a'ẕam shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn al-mujāhid ahmad shāh ibn muhammad shāh al-sultān*

Legend in the central field,
Shahāda
Mint: Dākhil Banjaliya
Date: 836 (?)

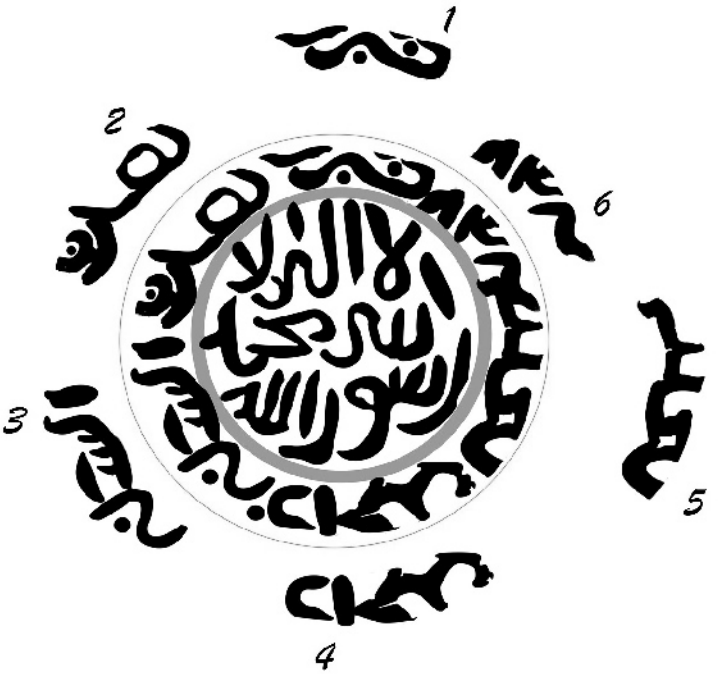
[28] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 116.

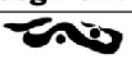
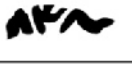
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | الاعظم | *al-aʿẓam* |
| 3 | | شمس | *shams* |
| 4 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | | و | *wa* |
| 6 | | الدين | *al-dīn* |
| 7 | | المجاهد | *al-mujāhid* |
| 8 | | احمد | *ahmad* |
| 9 | | ساه | *shāh* |
| 10 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 11 | | محمد ساه | *muhammad shāh* |
| 12 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Margin**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | ضرب | *zarb* |
| 2 | | هذه | *hazihi* |
| 3 | | السكه | *al-sikkah* |
| 4 | | داخل | *dākhil* |
| 5 | | بنجالية | *banjaliya* |
| 6 |  | ٨٣٦ | 836 |

## GHIYĀTH AL-DĪN NUSRAT SHĀH

### (AH 837/CE 1433-4)

Though Shams al- Dīn Ahmad Shāh was the last ruler from the family of Raja Ganesh, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh who succeeded Ahmad Shāh has been placed in this chapter as he did not belong to next dynasty or because probably he was an official of Ahmad Shāh and claimed the sultānate, while could not retain it due to conspiracy or continuous politics of power at that time. It is not only a fact that he had a short period of reign, it is also evident from known coins to date of this ephemeral ruler that he could not extend his control beyond Mu'azzamabad.[29]

[29] S.M.I. Alam, 'Two Little-known sultans of Eastern Bengal', *Journal of the oriental numismatic society,* Vol. 186, 2006, p. 29.

## Coin B-41-01

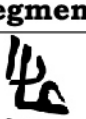
### Silver Tanka

**Obverse:** *ghiyāth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l mujāhid nusrat shāh al-sultān*

**Reverse:** *al-musta'īn billāh al-must'an*

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | غياث | *ghiyāth* |
| 2 | | نصرة | *nusrat* |

CHAPTER 7

# SECOND PHASE OF ILYĀS SHĀHĪ DYNASTY

Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (CE 1428; 1433-59) was the founder of the second phase of Ilyās Shāhī dynasty. Mahmūd Shāh attempted to reinstate his forefather's family as the ruler[1] but could not gain full control until AH 837/CE 1433. The major rulers of the second phase (CE 1433-87) of the Ilyās Shāhī dynasty were Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (CE 1433-59), Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh (CE 1459-74), Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh (CE 1474-81), Sikandar Shāh II (CE 1481) and Jalāl al-Dīn Fath Shāh (CE 1481-7).

| Serial No. | Name of the Coin Issuing Authority | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 43 | Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh | 832; 837-64 | 1428; 1433-59 |
| 44 | Rukun al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh (s/o Mahmūd Shāh) | 864-79 | 1459-74 |
| 45 | Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh (s/o Bārbak Shāh) | 879-85 | 1474-81 |
| 46 | Nur al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh (s/o Mahmūd Shāh) | 885 | 1481 |
| 47 | Jalāl al-Dīn Fath Shāh (s/o Mahmūd Shāh) | 886-93 | 1481-7 |

## NĀSIR AL-DĪN MAHMŪD SHĀH

### (AH 832; 837-64/CE 1428; 1433-59)

Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh was successor of Ilyās Shāhī family. Anarchy started after death of Shams al-Dīn Ahmad Shāh and was ended by takeover of the sultānate by Mahmūd Shāh. Though AH 837 (CE 1433) is considered as the first year of his reign, there are recently discovered numismatic evidences, which show that he probably tried to capture the sultānate even earlier. After he ensured full control in the sultānate, he brought back prosperity and peace that is evident from his fifteen stone inscriptions that record the construction of mosques, tombs, etc.[2] A large number of his coins and varieties also evince the prosperous Bengal sultānate during his reign.

[1] M.S. Islam and N. Nāsir, 'Revisiting Nāsir al Dīn Mahmūd Shāh's reign in Bengal: A study based on literature and numismatic evidences.' *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 223, pp. 24-6.

[2] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., pp. 118-9.

## Coin B-43-01

### Silver Tanka

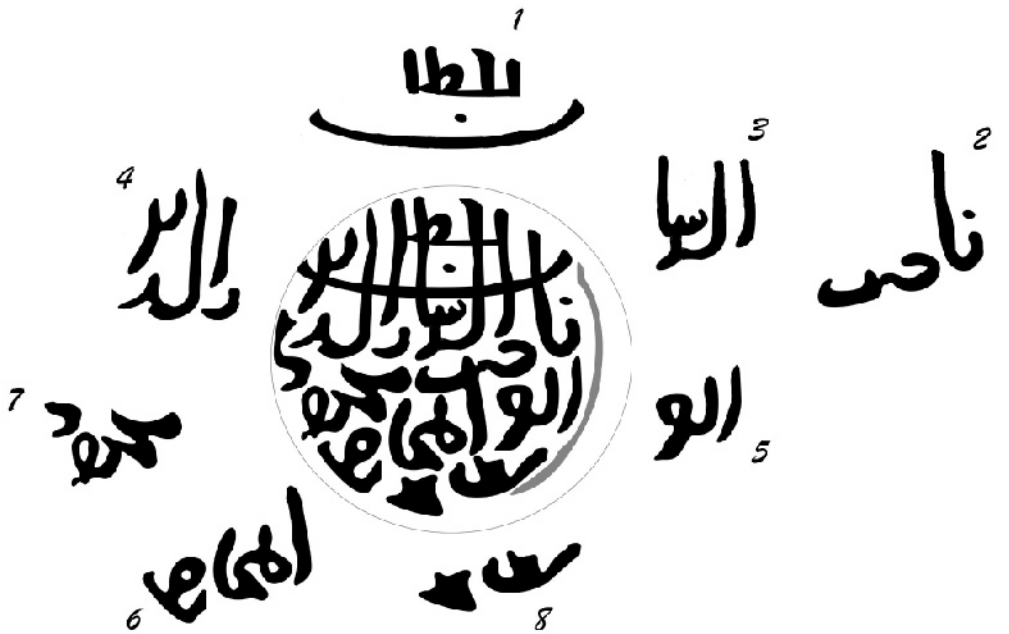
**Calligraphic Style:** *Tughra al-Bangalia, Muhaqqaq* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Legend in the field,
*sultān nāsir al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l mujahid mahmūd shāh*

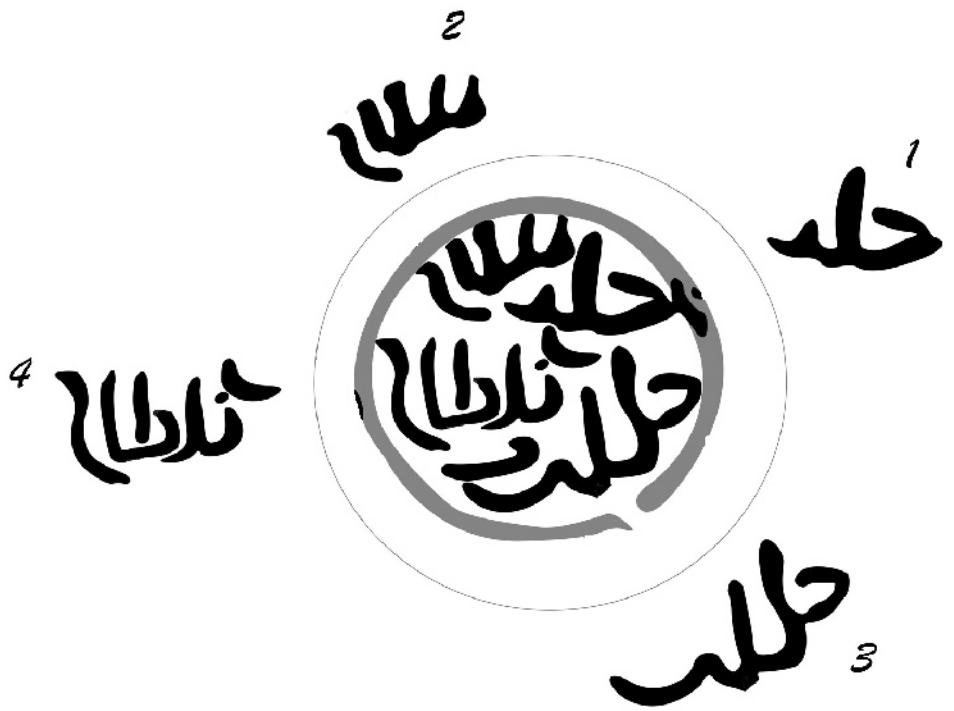
Legend in the central field,
*khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu*
Mint: Dākhil Banjaliya
Date: 84?

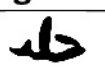
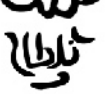
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 2 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 3 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 4 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 5 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 6 | | المجاهد | *al-mujahid* |
| 7 | | محمود | *mahmūd* |
| 8 | | شاه | *shāh* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Central Legend**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | خلد | *khallada* |
| 2 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 3 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 4 |  | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |

## Rebellion of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd[3]

This particular finding is originated from a few newly discovered coins of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh that bear a date on them, which contradicts with the present record about the beginning year of Mahmūd's reign. This finding has been published in an article[4] by Md. Shariful Islam, author of the volume, and Noman Nasir, where literature on the reign of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh have been reviewed, the newly discovered coins have been examined and then based on both, an attempt has been made to draw conclusion about the probable events that might have taken place during that time in Bengal Sultānate that also have implications in the reign of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh.

### Review of Related Literature

From the literature on history of Bengal it is observed that the authors or historians are providing differing opinions on the reign of Mahmūd Shāh, especially on the beginning of his reign. The beginning year of reign of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh has been mentioned by Mohar Ali (1985)[5] and Habibulllah (2006)[6] as AH 846; Shahnewaz (2002) as CE 1437/8 (or AH 841);[7] Yaqub Ali (1998)[8] as AH 839; Iftekhar Alam (2006) and Rahman, *et. al.* (2011) as AH 838;[9] and Abdul Karim (2001)[10] as AH 837. Therefore, from the available literature it has been observed that the authors are not in uniform opinion regarding the date of beginning of the reign of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh. It has been observed from this review that the earliest date of the ruler that has been mentioned by any previous study is AH 837, though few of them have published numismatic evidences.

On the other hand, *Reaz-us-Salatin* describes Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh as 'an able ruler who ruled Bengal for a period of 32 years. In another description it is said that he ruled Bengal for 27 years'.[11] First year of Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak has been confirmed from coins of the ruler as AH 864.[12] From coins and inscriptions on stones of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh it is confirmed that Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd ruled until AH 864.[13]

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[3] This finding was originally published in M.S. Islam and N. Nāsir, 'Revisiting Nāsir al Dīn Mahmūd Shāh's reign in Bengal: A study based on literature and numismatic evidences.' *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 223, pp. 24-6.

[4] M.S. Islam and N. Nāsir, op. cit., pp. 24-6.

[5] M.M.Ali, op. cit., pp. 164-82.

[6] Habibullah, *Later Iliyas Shahis and the Abyssinians (1442-1498),* in the *History of Bengal,* edited by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, The University of Dacca, Dacca, 2006, pp. 130-141.

[7] A.K.M. Shahnewaz, *Bharat Upamahadesher Itihas, Madhya Yug: Sultani Parba,* Reprint (2007), Protik, Banglabazar, Dhaka, 2002, pp. 198-9.

[8] A.K M Y. Ali, *Varendra Anchaler Mudra* and *Prostor Lipi: Ekti Somikkha (Muslim Amal)* in Varendra Anchaler Itihas, Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Rajshahi, 1998, pp. 452-85.

[9] S.M.I. Alam, op. cit., 2006, pp. 28-29; S.M. Rahman, M. Muhibullah, M.J. Islam, S.B. Salam, A.K. Shaha, and A.Samad, Cowri to Taka, Triune-Monitor Publications, Dhaka, 2011, pp. 30-1.

[10] M.R. Karim, *A Critical Study of the Coins of the independent Sultans of Bengal (From 1205AD-1538AD),* unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, 2001.

[11] G.H. Salim, op. cit., p.267.

[12] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., pp. 187-217.

[13] Islam, M.S. and N. Nāsir, op. cit., pp. 24-6, coin no. 8; A. Karim, op. cit., 2007; Blochmann, H. , op. cit., pp. 63-4.

Taking AH 864 as the last year of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh, if the description of his reign of 27 years is accepted, we get AH 837 as the first year of his reign. On the other hand, if the description of his reign of 32 years is accepted, we get AH 832 as the first year of reign of the ruler. Therefore, there is clear controversy about the first date of reign of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh in the contemporary historical record, while the present historical records are based on discovered numismatic evidences and/or inscriptions on stones that could not explain the cause(s) of the controversy in the contemporary historical record(s).

**Newly Discovered Numismatic Evidences**

A few recently discovered coins of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh have been investigated by Md. Shariful Islam and Noman Nasir in the said paper. This effort resulted into identification of three coins dated AH 837 that belong to type B433 of Goron and Goenka (2001). Dates on two of these coins have been written in appropriate direction while in one the date is written in retrograde. All of these three coins of AH 837 were issued from Fīrūzābād mint. It is observed that the die used for those three coins were not identical to any of them. Therefore, we can infer that a significantly large number of dies have been used to issue coins of AH 837 of this ruler.

The breakthrough finding of that study is the identification of four coins of the ruler with an earlier date AH 832. Coin **B-43-02** is one of those newly identified coins with date AH 832 coins. No dates in between AH 832 and AH 837 could be located. Two of these coins were issued from Fīrūzābād mint while the remaining two were from Arsha Chatgaon mint. It is observed that the obverse of the two coins of the Fīrūzābād mint have been made from an identical die, while the reverse of these coins have been made from different dies. On the other hand it is observed that the obverse of the Arsha Chatgaon mint coins have been made using different dies though the reverse have been made using identical die. There are a few inferences drawn from these coins. Firstly, from the evidence of these four coins dated AH 832 that show use of at least one identical die for two of those coins that are issued from the same mint may have been caused by the fact that a significantly lower number of coins were issued on this date from a few mints. Secondly, the reverse of the four coins showing date and mint have been produced using three dies and from two different mints. This presents strong evidence that the date inscribed on the coins was likely not result of an error.

## Coin B-43-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

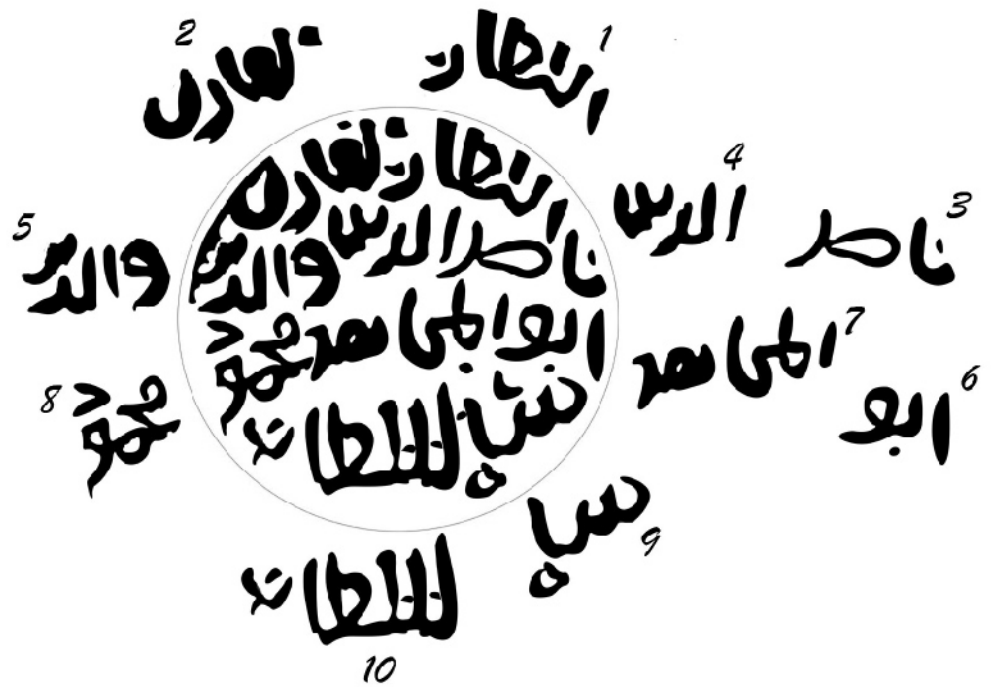
Obverse

Legend in the field,
*al-sultān al-ʻādil nāsir al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l mujahid mahmūd shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

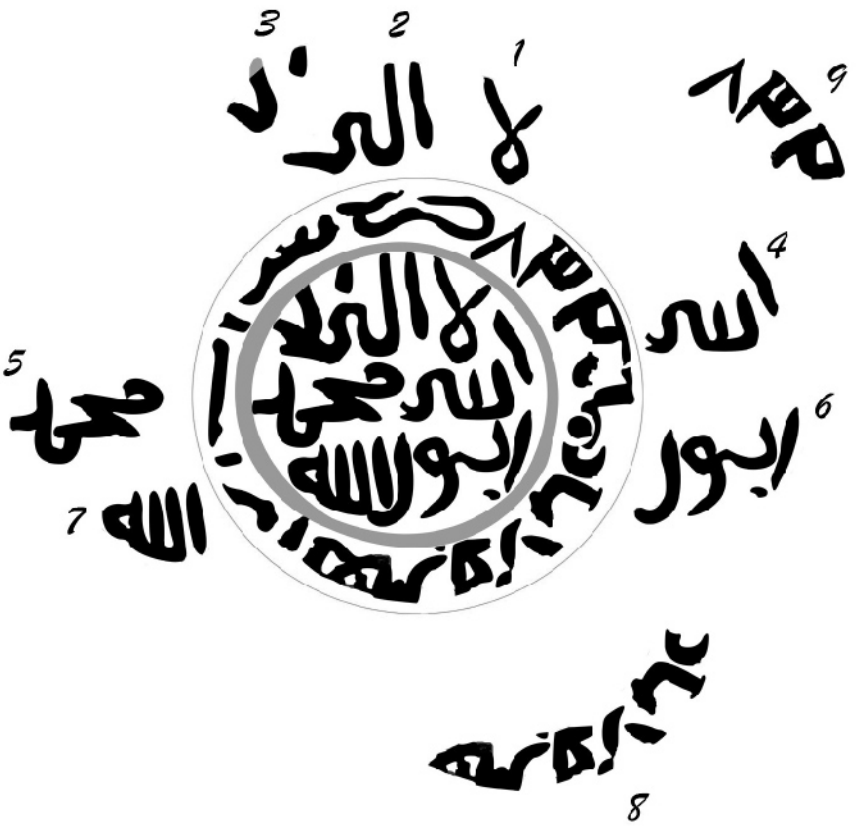
Legend in the central field,
shahāda.
Mint: Fīrūzābād
Date: 832

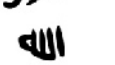
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | العادل | *al-'ādil* |
| 3 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 4 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 5 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 6 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 7 | | المجاهد | *al-mujahid* |
| 8 | | محمود | *mahmūd* |
| 9 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 10 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | لا | *lā* |
| 2 | | اله | *ilaha* |
| 3 | | الا | *Illā* |
| 4 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 5 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 6 | | رسول | *rasūl* |
| 7 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 8 |  (repaired) | فيروزاباد | *fīrūzābād* |
| 9 |  | ٨٣٢ | *832* |

The numismatic findings of two dates AH 837 and 832 matches with the two conflicting dates drawn from description of Salim (1788) about the beginning year of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh. It is not plausible to accept the coins of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh that was issued in AH 832 as an evidence to record this date as the beginning year of his reign as Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh continued his reign until AH 836/37 and his son Shams al-Dīn Ahmed Shāh reigned in the year AH 837.[14] Therefore, the identified coins of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh of the year AH 832 from two different mints may indicate a probable political conflict between Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh and Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh. Karim (2007) commented, "It is also thought that supporters of Ilyās Shāhī family were active in recapturing the throne of Bengal. But they could not succeed during Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad but after death of Muhammad this group became powerful in the reign of premature Shams al-Dīn Ahmad Shāh who died in their conspiracy and Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd ascended the throne of Bengal."[15] The discontinuation of the coins of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh after AH 832 until 837 may be caused by the fact that the move of Mahmūd for usurpation in the year AH 832 was not successful. Use of significantly lower number of dies for issuing coins that have been discovered so far bearing date AH 832 also support this argument. Finally, in AH 837 he captured Bengal Sultānate and continued his reign until AH 864.

## Seizure of Lost Areas of Bengal[16]

A newly discovered mint or location revealed from a coin (Coin B-43-03) has been presented in this section. The name that appears on the margin of the coin shows possibility of it being a mint or a captured territory of Bengal sultānate. The mentioned coin is of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (AH 832/CE 1428 and AH 837-64/CE 1433-59) of Bengal Sultānate that is similar to type B455, B458, and B459 of Goron and Goenka, 2001.[17] Mints of these three types of coins are Dākhil Banjaliya, al-Fīrūzābād and Iqlim Muazzamabād respectively. But the mint on the margin of reverse of coin clearly shows *Dākhil* followed by 'ba'+ 'lam' + 'alif' followed by *būr* or *pūr.* These forms name of a location, most likely the mint of the coin, as *Dākhil Balābūr* or *Dākhil Balāpūr.* Figure 7.1 shows closer view of the reverse margin where the name of the mint is written.

[14] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit. pp. 190-197

[15] Translated from the book A. Karim, op. cit., p. 269.

[16] This section was originally published in 'Dakhil Balapur- a newly discovered mint of Bengal Sultānate', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 226, 2016, pp. 21-22 by Md. Shariful Islam, author of the volume. It has been reproduced here with partial modifications.

[17] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., pp. 187-217.

## Coin B-43-03

### Silver Tanka

**Obverse:** *nāsir al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l mujāhid mahmūd shāh al-sultān*
**Reverse:** *nāsir al-islām wa'l muslimīn khallada mulkahu, Metal: Silver; Mass: 9.82 g,* Date: Off flan
**Analysis of the Mint/Location**

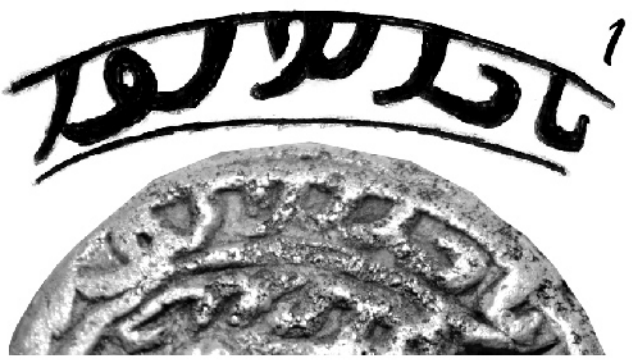


**Figure 7.1: Dākhil Balāpūr on Margin**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | داخل بلابور | *dākhil balāpūr* |

**Probable Location and Historical Implications**

The exact location of *Balāpūr (būr)* is not identified, as this name is not noticed in any other source. In Arabic *būr* means port which later may have been derived to *pūr* and there are many locations in Bangladesh with suffix *pūr*. If *Dākhil Balāpūr* has rightly been deciphered as the name of a location on the coin, as *būr* may have been derived to *pūr* in *Bangla*, we have searched *Balāpūr* in Google map and Google map locates two *Balāpūr,* one on the border of Northwest part of present Bangladesh (Medieval East Bengal) and West Bengal of India and the other in Norshingdi district inside Bangladesh. As the first location is at almost in the central area of Gaur of medieval Bengal, the word *Dākhil* meaning either gateway or entrance or seizure is probably not meaningful. Hence, this location is less likely the possible location as the mint or city inscribed on the coin. The second *Balāpūr* is a village located on the river bank of Meghna of present Norshingdi district in Bangladesh. Other side of the river is Cumilla district which was under Tripura Kingdom (Blochmann, 1968).[18] Figure 7.2 shows location of *Balāpūr* in Norshingdi district by Google map. *Balāpūr* was an important river port. There is still ruin of residence of Zamidar (landlord) Nobin Chandra Saha that was built in the year CE 1906. This indicates that the said *Balāpūr* was probably an important business place earlier even during medieval period. As it was a river port, the word *Dākhil* may have been used before *Balāpūr* to indicate *Balāpūr* as a gateway to Bengal from the side of Tripura.

It has been mentioned elsewhere in this volume that there is evidence that Tripura once encroached up to Sonargāon of Bengal. Dharma Manikya of Tripura (CE 1431-62) enlarged boundary of Tripura kingdom taking advantage of weakness of Bengal sultāns.[19] Reign of Dharma Manikya was started during the political crisis in Bengal when Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh was probably in power struggle with Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh (CE 1415-6/AH 818-9 and CE 1418-32/AH 821-36) and his successor Shams al-Dīn Ahmad Shāh (CE 1433/AH 837). Therefore, it is not unlikely that Norshingdi district or a part of it went under Tripura kingdom during early years of Dharma Manikya of Tripura as there was political instability in Bengal during usurpation of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh from Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh or Shams al-Dīn Ahmad Shāh in AH 837. After securing his control over Bengal Sultānate, Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh probably regained those lands from Tripura. According to Blochmann (1968), with the restoration of Iliyās shāhī dynasty by Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh, Bengal recovered her ancient limits. Therefore, another possibility is that, the word *Dākhil* indicates seizure of *Balāpūr* as an eastern limit by Bengal Sultānate. B455 and B458,[20] which are similar in type of coin B-43-03, with different mint name though; bear AH 842 and 841 as date on them. Date of B459[21] could not be read. Therefore, it can be presumed that this type of coins of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh was issued during his early years of reign.

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[18] H. Blochmann, op. cit., pp. 27-8.
[19] N.G. Rhodes and S.K. Bose, op. cit., 2002, p. 102.
[20] Goron S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 207.
[21] Ibid, op. cit., p. 207.

This fits into the argument that the coin was issued at some time during Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh's expansion of boundary of Bengal which may have taken place during his early years of reign after he has secured his position in Bengal and *Balāpūr* is a mint city or the coin commemorates seizure of *Balāpūr* by Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh.

**Figure 7.2 Location of Balāpūr Indicated** (Source: Google map)

Though still very rare, recently a few more specimens of coins of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh has come out that clearly show mint *Dākhil Balāpūr* on the reverse. These coins confirm *Dākhil Balāpūr* as a mint town during Bengal Sultānate. Coin B-43-04 is one such specimen that is different from Coin **B-43-03** in type. Therefore, at least two different types have been issued from this mint. Coin **B-43-04** bears date 843 AH, which supports the argument that, coins from *Dākhil Balāpūr* had been issued since or in the early years of the reign of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh. Probable location of *Dākhil Balāpūr*, conjectured earlier, still requires further evidences for confirmation.

## Coin B-43-04

**Silver Tanka**[22]

**Obverse:** *nāsir al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l mujāhid mahmūd shāh al-sultān*
**Reverse:** *nāsir al-islām wa'l muslimīn khallada mulkahu,* Date: 843

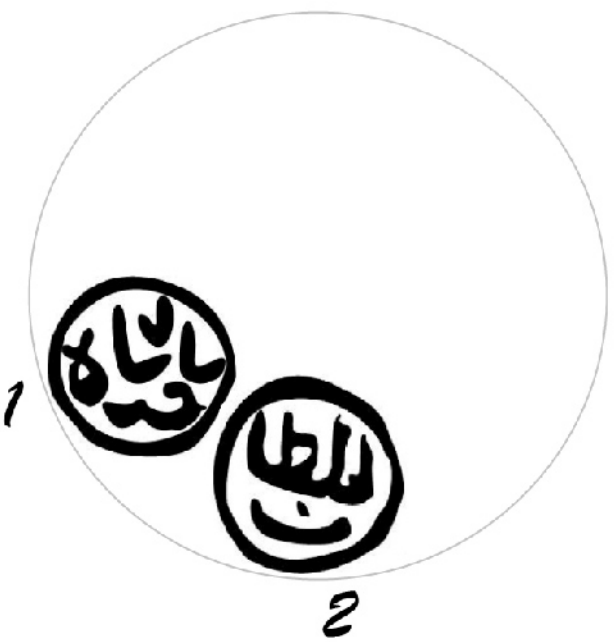
[22] Image received from Husain Al-Bakar.

## Coin B-43-05

### Silver Tanka

**Obverse Legend:** *nāsir shāh* in four circles and *sultān* in three circles.
**Reverse Legend:** *ghawth al-islām wa'l muslimīn,* Mint: Dākhil Banjaliya, Date: 854

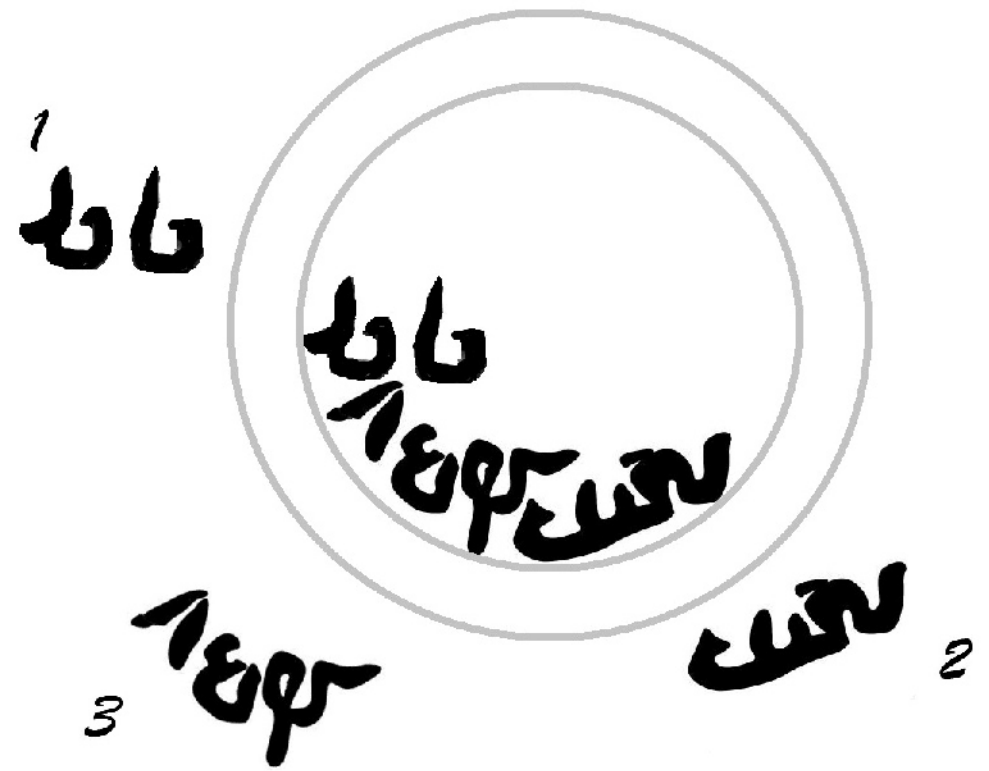
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ناصر شاه | *nāsir shāh* |
| 2 | | سلطان | *sultān* |

On the top of the *śin* of *shāh* there is a moon like symbol that represents three dots of *śin*.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | داخل | *dākhil* |
| 2 | | بنجالية | *banjāliya* |
| 3 | | ٨٥٤ | 854 |

# RUKN AL- DĪN BĀRBAK SHĀH

## (AH 864-79/CE 1459-74)

Bārbak Shāh, son of Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh, ascended the throne in AH 864 (CE 1459). During his time Bengal Sultānate was a large kingdom and he had a number of military expeditions such as expeditions of Tirhut, Madāran and Kāmrup.[23] He was law-abiding competent sultān of Bengal. One major strategic innovation of Bārbak Shāh was recruiting a large number of Habshis (East Africans) in his army and among them about eight thousand were employed in high posts.[24] These Habshis were happy and obedient during reign of Bārbak Shāh but revolted sometime after his death and even captured sultānate of Bengal that has been discussed later in this volume. Bārbak Shāh was succeeded by his son Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh.

## Coin B-44-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth al-me'dania.*

[23] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 120.
[24] Ibid., p. 123.

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*al-sultān ibn al-sultān rukn al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-mujāhid bārbak shāh al-sultān ibn mahmūd shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

Shahāda in the central field,
Mint: khazānah, Date: 864

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 3 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 4 | | ركن | *rukn* |
| 5 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 6 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 7 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 8 | | المجاهد | *al-mujāhid* |
| 9 | | باربک شاه | *bārbak shāh* |
| 10 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 11 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 12 | | محمود | *mahmūd* |
| 13 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 14 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | لاالہ | *lā ilaha* |
| 2 | | الا | *Illā* |
| 3 | | اللہ | *allāh* |
| 4 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 5 | | رسول | *rasūl* |
| 6 | | اللہ | *allāh* |
| 7 | | خزانہ | *khazānah* |
| 8 | | ٨٦٤ | *864* |

## Coin B-44-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth al-me'dania, Naskh* and *tughra al-bangalia.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

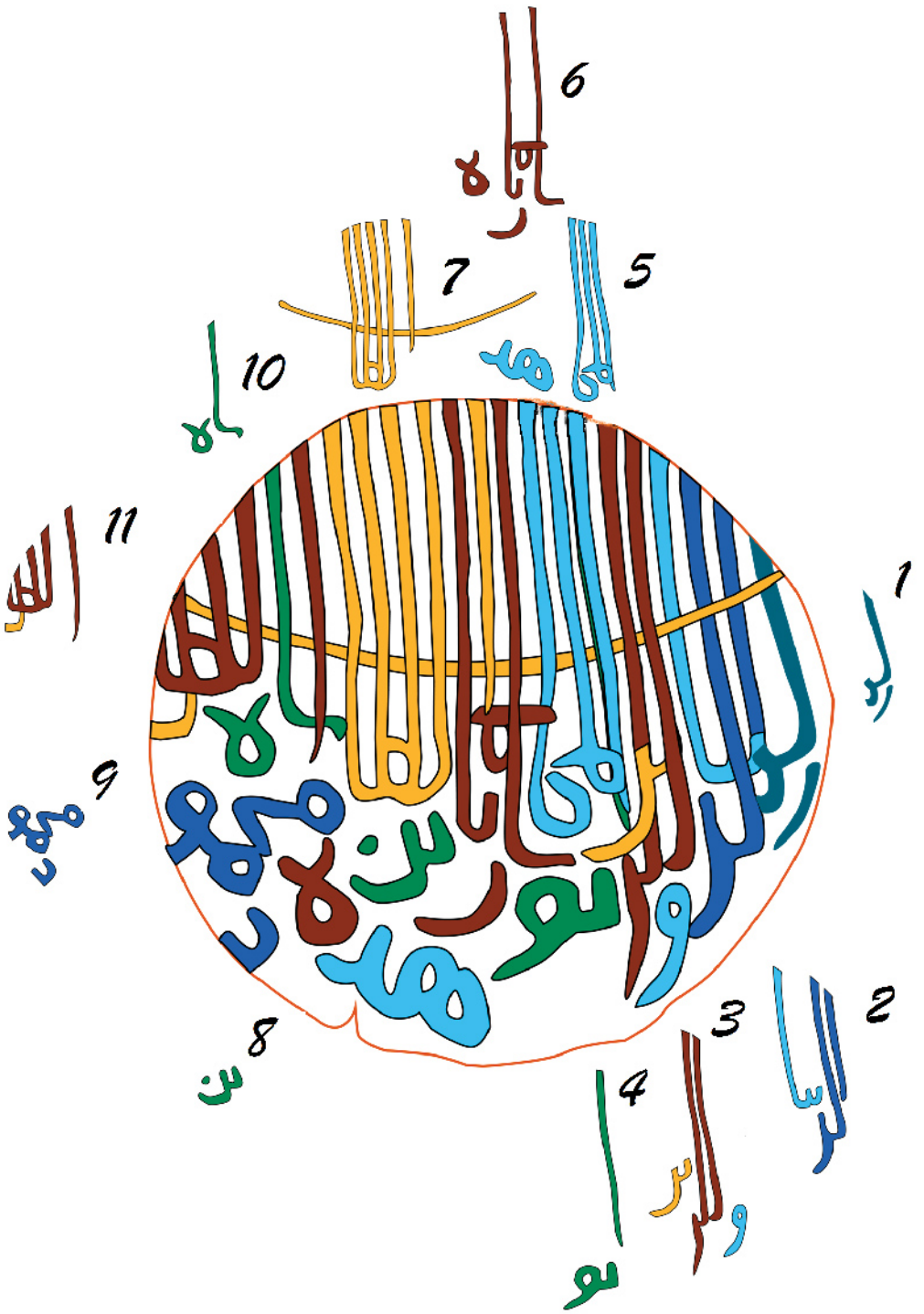
Obverse

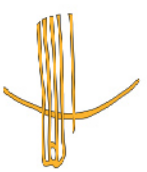
Legend in the field,
*rukn al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-mujāhid bārbak shāh al-sultān bin mahmūd shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

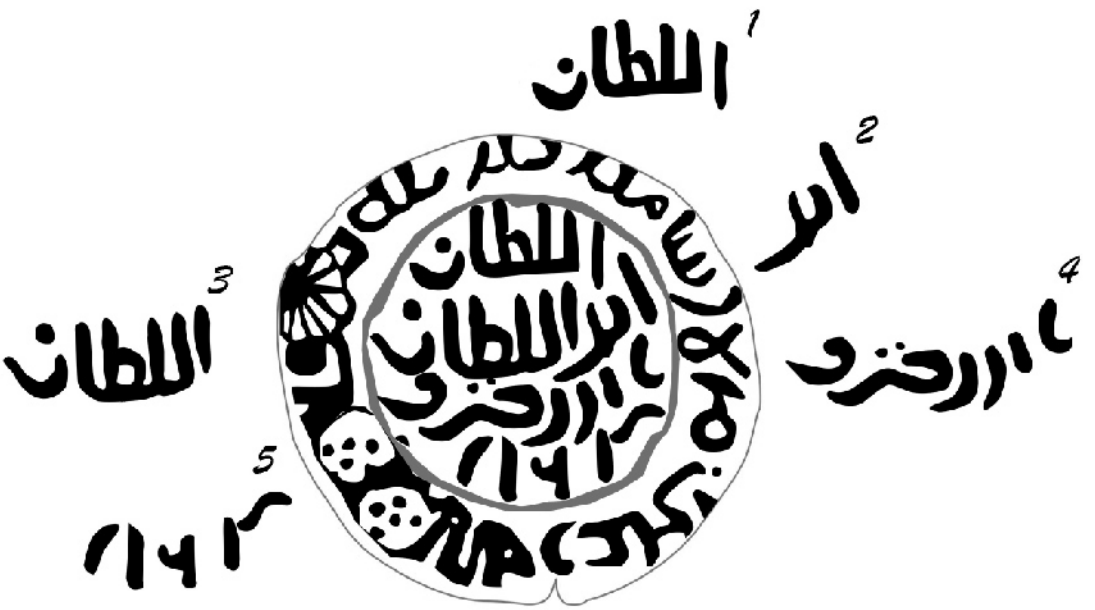
Legend in the central field,
*al-sultān ibn al-sultān*
Mint: dār al-zarb
Date: 864
Legend on the margin is not clearly legible.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ركن | *rukn* |
| 2 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 3 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 4 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 5 | | المجاهد | *al-mujāhid* |
| 6 | | باربک شاه | *bārbak shāh* |
| 7 |  | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 8 | | بن | *bin* |
| 9 | | محمود | *mahmūd* |
| 10 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 11 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 3 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 4 | | دارال ضرب | *dār al-zarb* |
| 5 | | ٨٦٤ | *864 (date)* |

## Coin B-44-03

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth al-me'dania, Naskh* and *Tughra al-bangalia.*

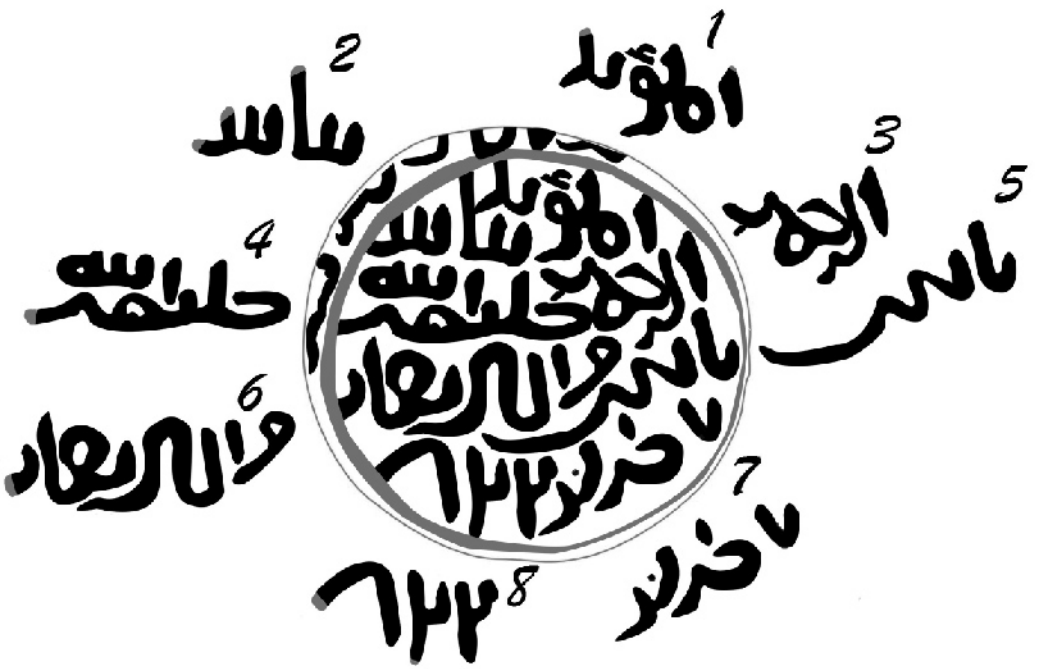
**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

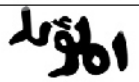
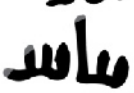
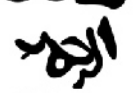
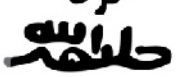
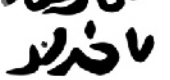
Legend in the field,
*rukn al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-mujāhid bārbak shāh al-sultān bin mahmūd shāh al-sultān*

Legend in the central field,
*al-mūyad bitayiid al-rahman khalīfat allāh bil huzzat wa'l burhān*
Mint: nāsirābād ?
Date: 822 (retrograded date, should be 866)

Obverse legend of the coin is similar to previous coin of the same ruler while the reverse legend is different. Analysis of the reverse legend follows.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | الموءيد | *al-mūyad* |
| 2 |  | بتايد | *bitayiid* |
| 3 |  | الرحمن | *al-rahman* |
| 4 |  | خلفتا الله | *khalīfat allāh* |
| 5 | | بالحجت | *bil huzzat* |
| 6 | | والبرهان | *wa'l burhān* |
| 7 |  | ناصراباد | *Nāsirābād (?)*<br>(this reading is tentative) |
| 8 | | ٨٢٢ | *822 (retrograded date, should be 866)* |

## Coin B-44-04

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

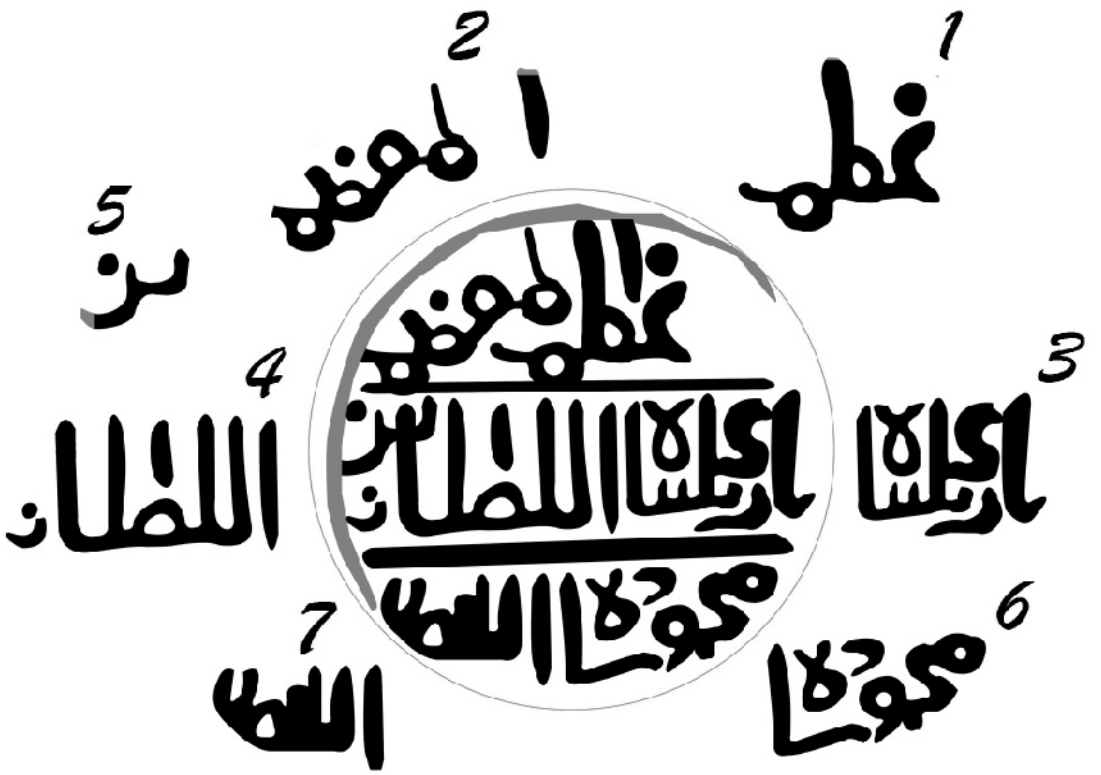
**Obverse**

Legend inside circle,
*al-a'a̲z̲m al-mu'a̲z̲z̲am/ bārbak shāh al-sultān bin/ mahmūd shāh al-sultān*

**Reverse**

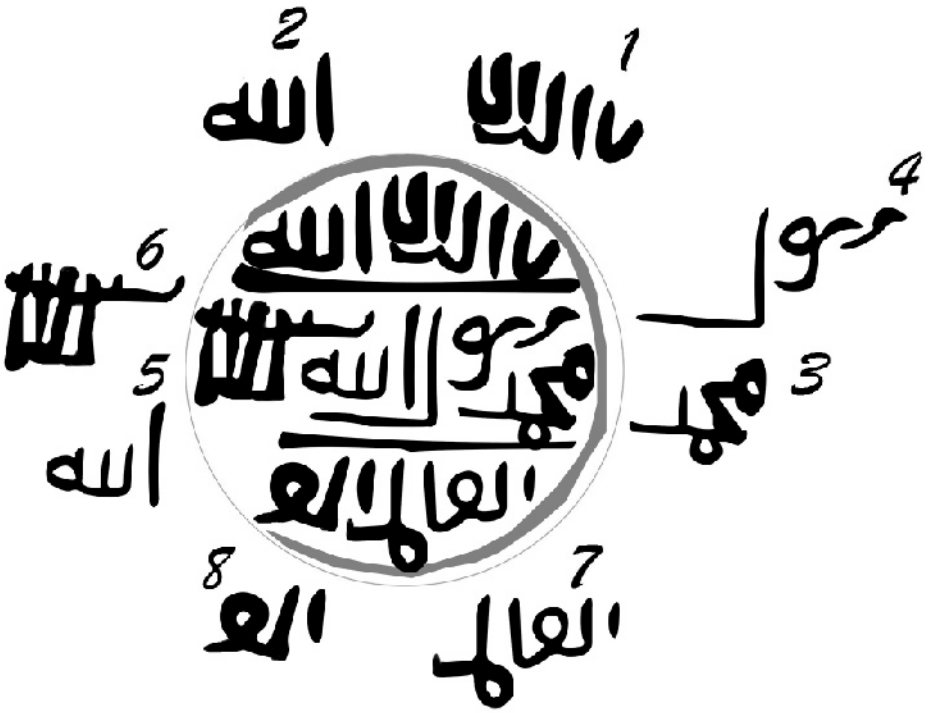
In the field,
*lā ilaha illā allāh/ muhammad rasūl allāh*
*al-sultān/ al-'alim al-'adil*
No mint or date

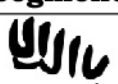
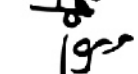
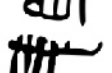
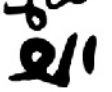
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | الاعظم | *al-aʿẓam* |
| 2 | | المعظم | *al-muʾaẓẓam* |
| 3 | | باربك شاه | *bārbak shāh* |
| 4 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 5 | | بن | *bin* |
| 6 | | محمود شاه | *mahmūd shāh* |
| 7 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | لااله الا | *lā ilaha illā* |
| 2 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 3 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 4 |  | رسول | *rasūl* |
| 5 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 6 |  | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 7 | | العالم | *al-'alim* |
| 8 |  | العادل | *al-'adil* |

# SHAMS AL-DĪN YŪSUF SHĀH

## (AH 879-85/CE 1474-81)

After death of Rukn al-dīn Bārbak Shāh his son Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh became sultān in the year AH 879 (CE 1474). Like his father, he was a just law-abiding able ruler of the Bengal Sultānate. No military expedition in his time is known. He probably followed centralization of mints, as a few mint towns are known of this ruler. Though a few new mint towns have been found recently, still coins from those mint towns are very rare and probably they were used occasionally. Two such new mints have been discussed in the following section along with a few commons.

### Coin B-45-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia, Naskh* and *Thuluth*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

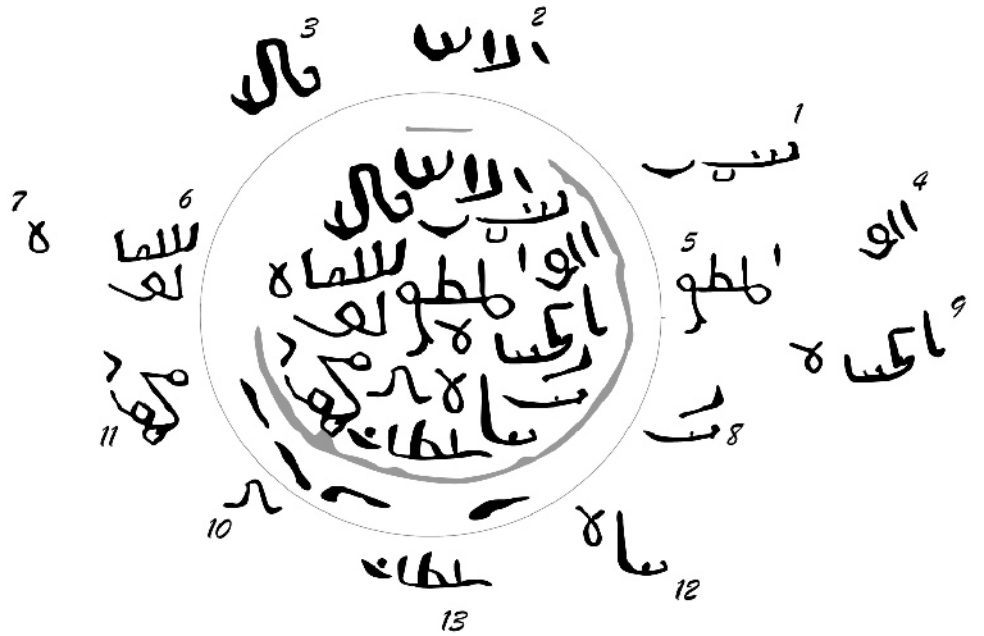
**Obverse**

Legend in the central field,
*shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-muẓaffar yūsuf shāh bin bārbak shāh bin mahmūd shāh sultān*

**Reverse**

Shahāda in the central field,
Mint: Dār al-Nūr
Date: 881

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | شمس | *shams* |
| 2 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 3 | | والد(ن) | *wa'l d(īn)* |
| 4 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 5 | | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 6 | | يوسف | *yūsuf* |
| 7 | | ه(شا) | *(shā)h* |
| 8 | | بن | *bin* |
| 9 | | باربك شاه | *bārbak shāh* |
| 10 | | بن | *bin* |
| 11 | | محمود | *mahmūd* |
| 12 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 13 | | سلطان | *sultān* |

## Coin B-45-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh, Muhaqqaq* and *thuluth*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

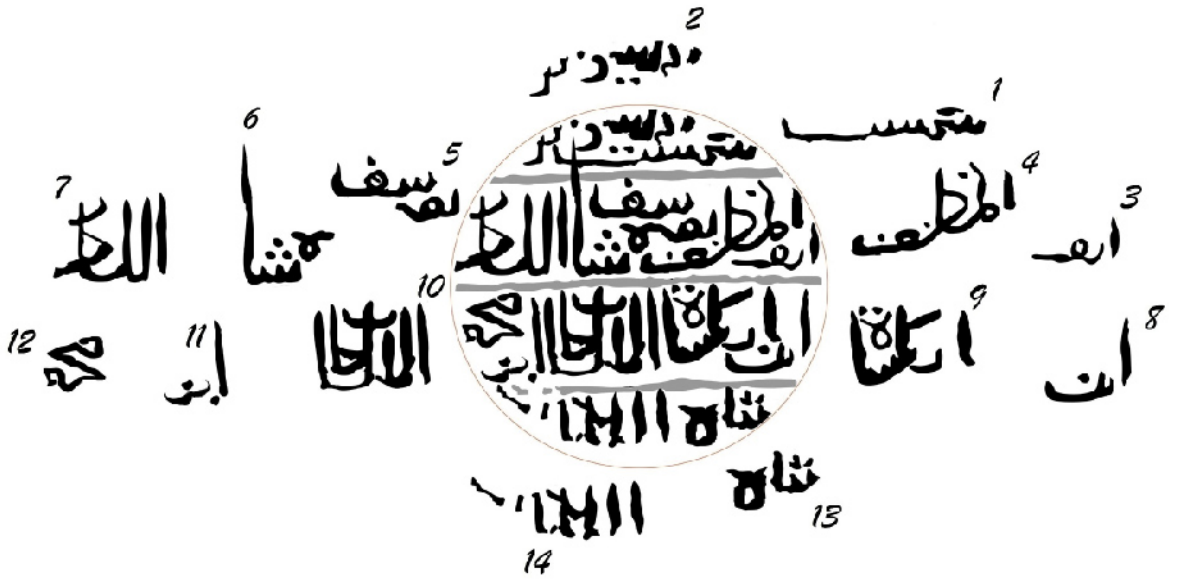
Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-muzaffar yūsuf shāh al-sultān ibn bārbak shāh al-sultān ibn mahmūd shāh al-sultān*

Reverse

Shahāda in the central field in two chambers. On the margin names of four caliphs.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | شمس | *shams* |
| 2 | | الدني والدين | *al-dunyā wa'l dīn* |
| 3 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 4 | | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 5 | | يوسف | *yūsuf* |
| 6 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 7 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 8 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 9 | | باربك شاه | *bārbak shāh* |
| 10 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 11 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 12 | | محمود | *mahmūd* |
| 13 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 14 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

## Khāzanah Mūnah as a Newly Identified Mint[25]

Coins of Yūsuf Shāh from only four mints have been recorded so far. Those are Dār al-Zarb, Barbakābād, Khazānah and Shamsābād. A variant of Khazānah with a suffix Mūmūn has been recorded earlier. It is not clear whether Khāzanah Mūmūn is another mint or it's just an ornamental name of the Khāzanah mint. Here a new mint- Khāzanah Mūnah- on a coin in the name of this ruler has been introduced.

Previously Stan Goron and J. P. Goenka (2001) introduced a coin of the same ruler in same type (B563)[26] where the mint name appears Khāzanah Mūmūn that has been translated as 'the bounteous treasury'.[27] Whereas on the coin that has been presented here shows Khāzanah Mūnah. The mint name appears inside the circle at the bottom on the reverse. In Arabic language the word *Mūnah* means 'supplies'. Therefore, it is possible that it was a central mint from where supplies used to go to other part of the country. It is also possible that this name of mint that appears on this coin is just a variation from the mint name that appears on the earlier mentioned coin presented by Stan Goron and J. P. Goenka (2001) or vice-versa.

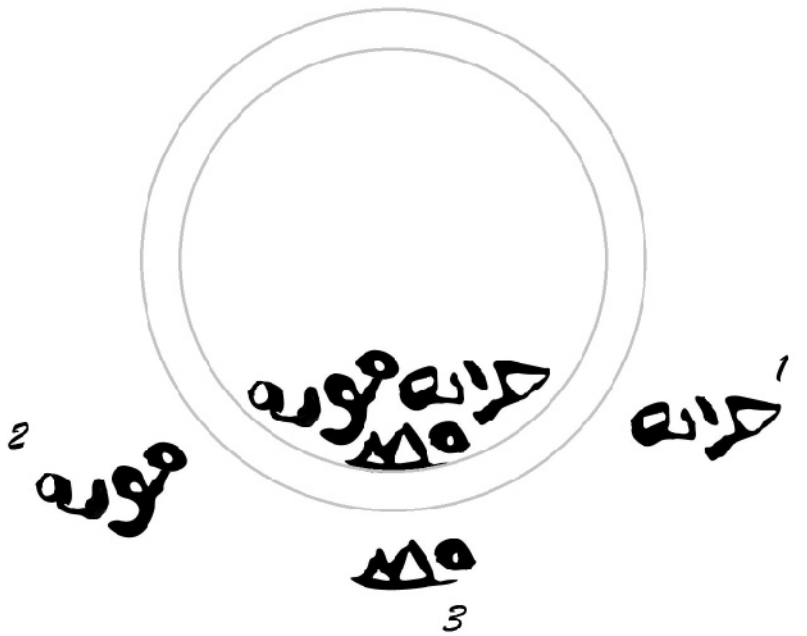
### Coin B-45-03

**Silver Tanka**

**Obverse Legend:** *Shams al-dunyāwa al-dīn abū'l muẓaffar yūsuf shāh sultān ibn bārbak sultān bin mahmūd shāh sultān*
**Reverse Legend:** Shahāda followed by the mint and date.
Weight: 10.49g, 29mm

[25] This coin has been identified by Md. Zahidul Hasan Mamun collaboration with Md. Shariful Islam. A paper on the coin has been submitted to the editor of the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society and here published with his consent.
[26] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., B563, p. 218.
[27] Ibid., B563, p. 217.

**Illustration of Mint and Date on the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | خزانه | خزانه | *khazānah* |
| 2 | مونه | مونه | *mūnah* |
| 3 | ۸۸۰ | ۸۸۰ | 880 |

## Muẕaffarābād Mint during Yūsuf Shāh[28]

Both sides of the coin are ornamented by squiggling border design. The mint name, Muẕaffarābād, appears inside the circle at the bottom on the reverse. This mint has been attributed so far with coins of Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh (AH 864-79/ CE 1459-74) of Bengal Sultānate.[29] Exact location of the mint Muẕaffarābād still has not been identified.

[28] This coin has been identified by Md. Zahidul Hasan Mamun and published with his permission. A paper on the coin has been submitted to the editor of the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society and here published with his consent.

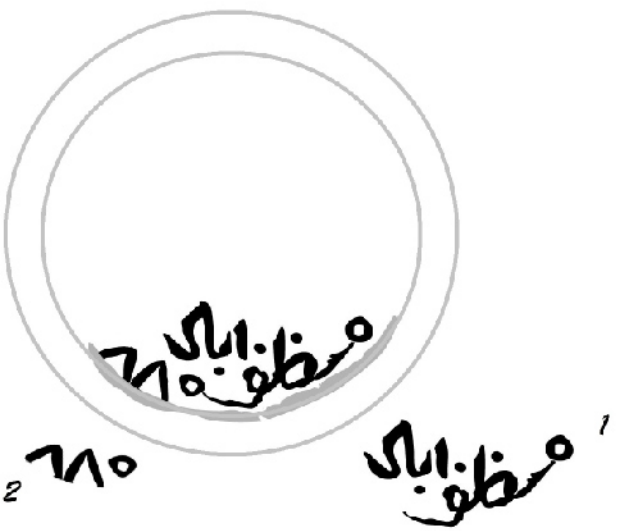
[29] S.M. Iftekhar Alam, op. cit., pp. 15-28.

## Coin B-45-04

### Silver Tanka

**Obverse :** *shams al-dunyāwa al-dīn abū'l muẕaffar yūsuf shāh sultān ibn bārbak sultān bin mahmūd shāh sultān*
**Reverse :** Shahāda followed by the mint and date.

**Illustration of Mint and Date on the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | مظفرابك | مظفراباد | *muẕaffarābād* |
| 2 | ٨٨٠ | ٨٨٠ | 880 |

# NŪR AL-DĪN SIKANDAR SHĀH
## (AH 885/CE 1481)

Bengal Sultānate was succeeded in by Nūr al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh who was brother of Rukn al- dīn Barbak Shāh. His reign was short and he had a touch of lunacy.[30] Raising such a lunatic person into the throne indicates lack of competent successor of the sultānate at that time or a conspiracy. One cause was that Yūsuf Shāh did not have any children to succeed. As a result, Jalāl al-Dīn Fath Shāh, brother of Nūr al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh, succeeded him.

## Khalīfatābād Mint during Nūr al-Dīn Sikandar[31]

This section introduces a new mint for the coins of Nūr al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh. The coin is similar in type to B580 published by Goron and Goenka,[32] where the authors described the ruler as 'ephemeral' and recorded 'Dār al-Ẓarb' as 'the only mint so far'[33]. The coin published here shows Khalīfatābād as the mint and AH 885 as the date on the reverse of the coin. The obverse of the coin bears the title of the ruler and the reverse bears the *kalima-i-shahāda* followed by the mint and date of issue.

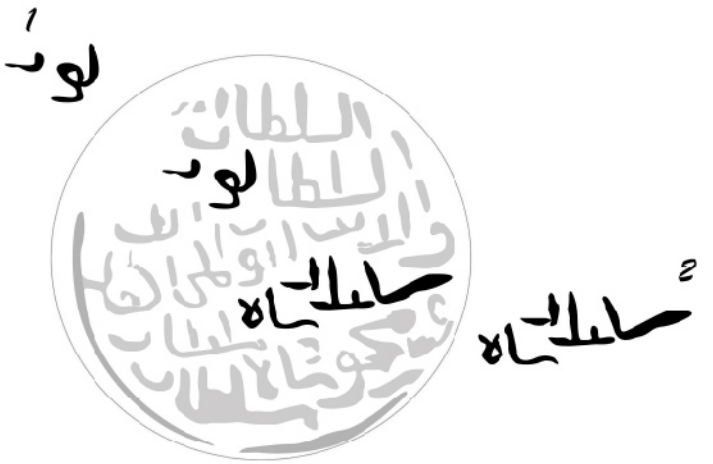
### Coin B-46-01

**Silver Tanka**[34]

**Obverse :** *al-sultān ibn al-sultān nūr al-dunyā wa al-dīn abū al-mujāhid sikandar shāh sultān ibn mahmūd shāh al-sultān*
**Reverse :** kalima-i-shahāda followed by the mint and date. Mint: Khalīfātābād, Date: 885
**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia* and *Thuluth*

[30] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 124-5.
[31] Originally published in as M.S. Islam and M. Shamsuddin. 'A new mint for Nur Al Dīn Sikandar Shāh of Bengal', Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society, 2017, Vol. 230, p. 32.
[32] S. Goron, and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., pp. 219-20.
[33] In his book The Bengal Sultānate: Politics, Economy and Coins (AD 1205-1576), Syed Ejaz Hussain illustrates on Plate XVII, coin 105, another silver tanka of this ruler with a very different design. Both sides of this coin have the main part of the legend enclosed within a double square with the rest of the legend in the margin. The coin is dated 885. The author reads the mint as Khazāna (The Treasury) but that is by no means clear in the illustration.
[34] Image courtesy to Dr. Ishaq Imam.

**Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title on the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | نور | *nūr* |
| 2 |  | سکندر شاہ | *sikandar shāh* |

**Analysis of the Mint and Date on the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | خلیفتاباد | *Khalīfatābād* |
| 2 | | ۸۸۵ | 885 |

Khalīfatābād has been identified as Bagerhat in the Khulna division of present-day Bangladesh. This mint appears on coins of the earlier ruler, Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (AH 832/ CE 837-64) and the later rulers, Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh (AH 925-38), 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (AH 938-39) and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (AH 939-45) of the Bengal Sultānate.[35] The previously recorded mint Dār al-Zarb was identified as the central mint of the sultānate, while Khalīfatābād is located in the southern part. Therefore, this coin probably shows that Nūr al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh was able to rule over more than just the central part of Bengal during his short period of reign.

# JALĀL AL-DĪN FATH SHĀH

### (AH 886-93/CE 1481-7)

As mentioned earlier, Yūsuf Shāh did not have any children. According to Murtaja Baseer,[36] Fath Shāh made a revolution for the first time earlier during reign of Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh in AH 882. This argument of Murtaja Baseer is based on numismatic evidences, one of which is preserved in the Museum of Chittagong University of Bangladesh and another is recorded by Goron and Goenka (2001). Murtaja Baseer rejects the possibility of inscribing the last digit as 2 mistakenly inversing of intended 6, as these two coins are made from different dies and also the quniath of the first coin is *Muẓaffar,* while on second coin it is *Mujahid.*[37] This effort of Fath Shāh was not successful because of the fact that the habshi soldiers and Generals were large in number in the army of Yūsuf Shāh. These habshi soldiers and Generals were obedient to Yūsuf Shāh after death of Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh and did not accept Fath Shāh as sultān of Bengal. After death of Yūsuf Shāh his lunatic paternal uncle Nūr al-Dīn Sikandar was raised to Sultānate. After Nūr al-Dīn Sikandar Fath Shāh raised himself as sultān of Bengal.

## Coin B-47-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* and *Muhaqqaq*

[35] S. Goron, and J.P. Goenka (2001), op. cit., pp. 140, 144.
[36] M. Baseer, op. cit., p. 32
[37] Ibid., p. 33

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

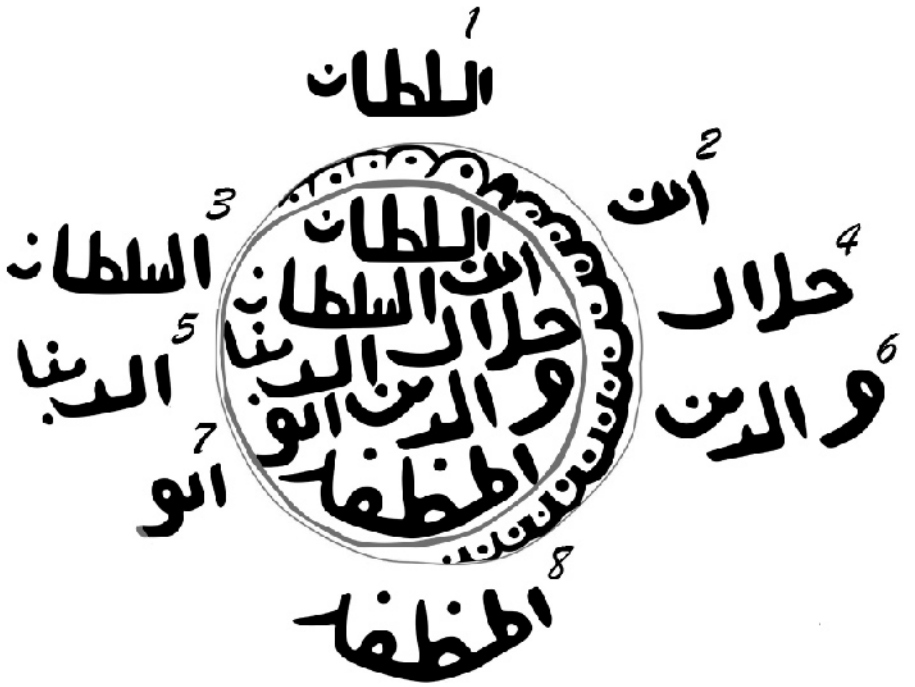
Obverse

Legend inside circle,
*al-sultān ibn al-sultān jalāl al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al muẓaffar*

Reverse

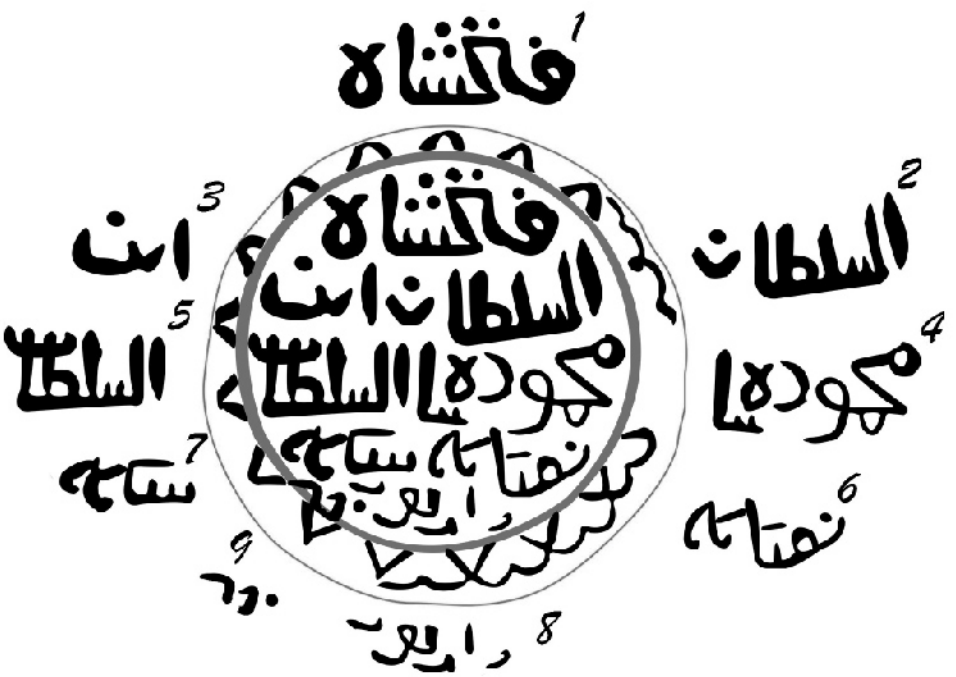
Legend in the central field,
*fath shāh sultān ibn mahmūd shāh al-sultān*
Extra words,
*sikkah (?) sikkah*
Mint: Dār Nūr
890 (Date)

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 3 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 4 | | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 5 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 6 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 7 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 8 | | المظفر | *al muẓaffar* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | فتحشاه | *fath shāh* |
| 2 | | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 3 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 4 | | محمودشاه | *mahmūd shāh* |
| 5 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 6 | | سسکح | *sikkah* (?) |
| 7 | | سکح | *sikkah* |
| 8 | | دارنور | *dār nūr* |
| 9 | | ۸۹۰ | 890 (Date) |

## Coin B-47-02

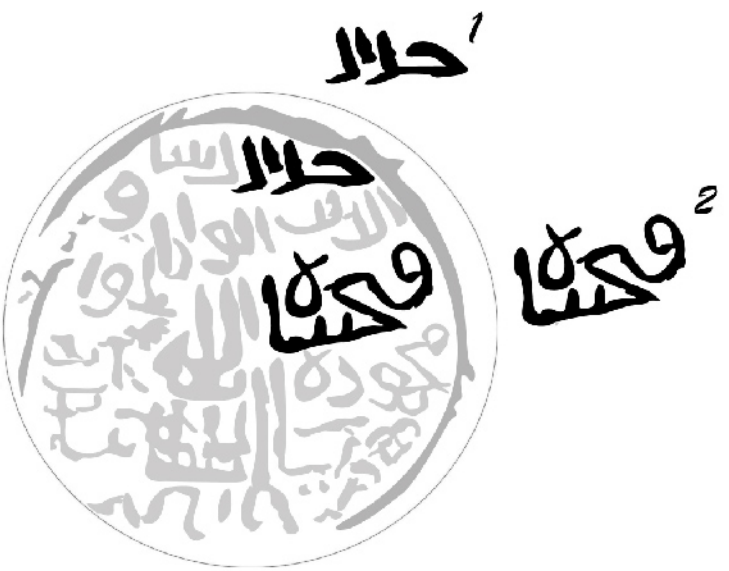
### Silver Tanka[38]

**Obverse :** Stylized lion to left

**Reverse :** *jalāl al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al muẓaffar fath shāh al-sultān bin mahmūd shāh al-sultān shams shāhī,* Mint: __bād

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 2 | | فتحشاه | *fath shāh* |

[38] Image received from S.M. Iftekhar Alam.

## Coin B-47-03

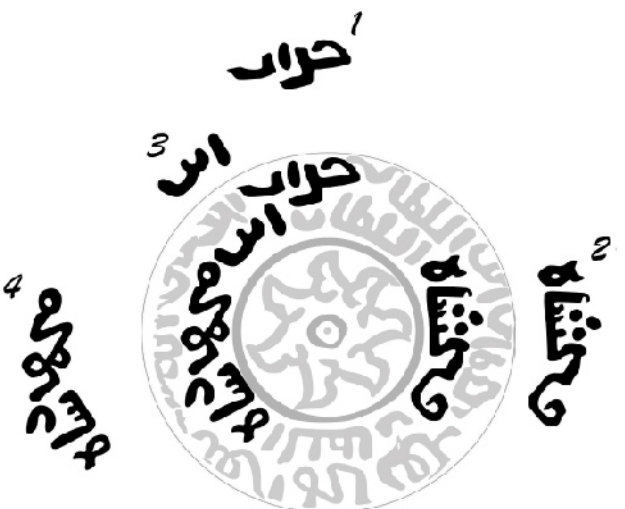
### Silver Tanka[39]

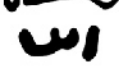
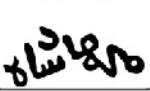
**Obverse :** Chakra or surya symbol in the center, on the margin in two lines *al-sultān bin al-sultān jalāl al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al mujāhid fath shāh al-sultān ibn mahmūd shāh al-sultān*

**Reverse :** Chakra or surya symbol in the center, on the margin Shahāda, Mint: Khazānah, Date: 886

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq, Thuluth* and *Kufic al-Bangalia*

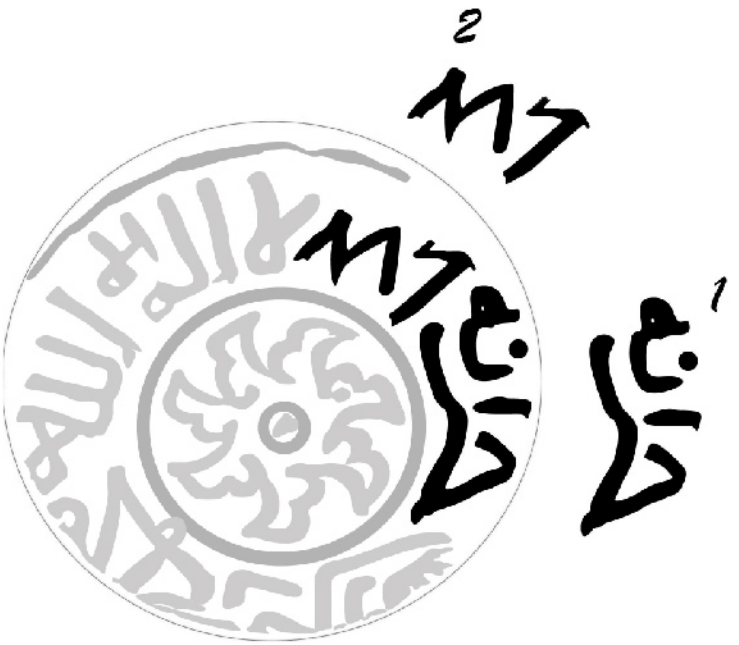
**Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title on the Obverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 2 | | فتحشاه | *fath shāh* |
| 3 |  | ابن | *ibn* |
| 4 |  | محمودشاه | *mahmūd shāh* |

[39] Image received from S.M. Iftekhar Alam.

**Analysis of the Mint and Date on the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | خزانه | خزانه | *khazānah* |
| 2 | ٨٨٦ | ٨٨٦ | 886 |

CHAPTER 8

# HABSHI RULERS

During the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Fath Shāh, Habshis became influential as Shahzada Bārbak (CE 1487)[1] became the commander of the guard of the palace. Bārbak led a conspiracy against the sultān and later Fath Shāh was killed[2]. Shahzada Bārbak took power and founded the Habshi dynasty in CE 1487. He assumed the title *Sultān Shahzada.* Other rulers of this dynasty were Saif al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (CE 1488-90), Mahmūd Shāh-II (CE 1490) and Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar Shāh (CE 1490-3). All of the Habshi rulers came in power by or as a result of conspiracy and were killed for power. Therefore, the reign of the Habshi rulers of Bengal is marked as a period of chaos and conspiracy.

| Serial No. | Name of the Coin Issuing Authority | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 48 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh (Shahajada Bārbak) | 893 | 1487-8 |
| 49 | Saif al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh | 893-6 | 1488-90 |
| 50 | Qutb al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (s/o Saif al-Dīn Fīrūz) | 896 | 1490 |
| 51 | Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar Shāh | 896-9 | 1490-3 |

## GHIYĀTH AL-DĪN BĀRBAK SHĀH

### (AH 893/CE1487-8)

Shahzada Bārbak, the first Habshi ruler, captured the sultānate of Bengal taking the title Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh. He had a short reign of less than a year and his coins are rare. One of his coins has been analyzed here.

[1] There is a controversy about Shahzada Barbak's origin as a Habshi. For further reading please see, Murtaja Baseer, *Mudra o Shilalipir Aloke Banglar Habshi Sultan o Totkalin Samaj,* Adorn Publications, Dhaka, 2004, p. 53.

[2] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p. 177.

## Coin B-48-01

### Silver Tanka

**Obverse :** *Ghiyāth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar bārbak shāh al-sultān khallada allāh mulkahu*
**Reverse :** Shahada, Mint: Fathābād, Date: 893
**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Thuluth*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | غناث | غناث | *ghiyāth* |
| 2 | باربكشاه | باربك شاه | *bārbak shāh* |

# SAIF AL-DĪN FĪRŪZ SHĀH

## (AH 893-6/CE1488-90)

Malik Andil was one of the obedient high ranked Habshi officials of Fath Shāh. Hearing the news of Fath Shāh's murder by Shahzada Bārbak, he marched with his army to confront with Bārbak and he killed the usurper. It is said that he became sultān of Bengal on request of Fath Shāh's widow and nobles. He took the title Saif al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh as it is evident from his coins.

### Coin B-49-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

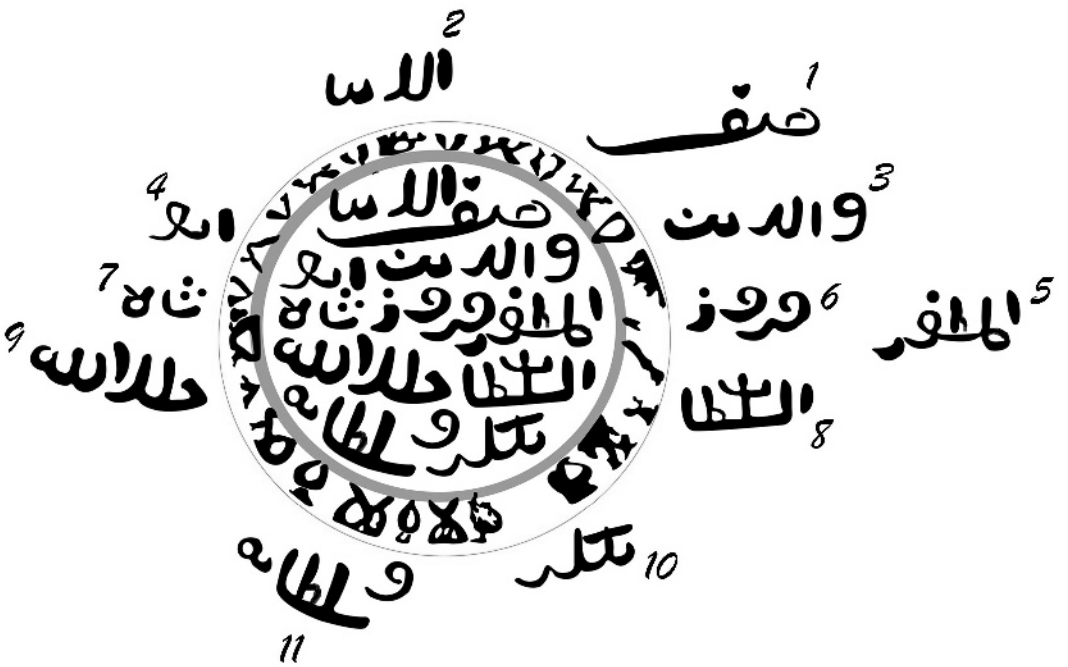
Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*saif al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar fīrūz shāh al-sultān khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu*

Reverse

Shahāda in the central field,
Date: (8)93
Mint: Fathābād

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | صف | سيف | *saif* |
| 2 | الاس | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 3 | والدين | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 4 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 5 | المظفر | المظفر | *al- muẓaffar* |
| 6 | فروز | فروز | *fīrūz* |
| 7 | شاه | شاه | *shāh* |
| 8 | السلطا | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 9 | خلالله | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 10 | ملكه | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 11 | وسلطانه | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | فتحاباد | فتحاباد | *fathābād* |
| 2 | ٩٣ | (٨)٩٣ | (8)93 |

## QUTB AL-DĪN MAHMŪD SHĀH

### (AH 896/CE 1490)

Qutb al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh, son of Saif al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh, succeeded the throne, while having a very short reign of approximately one year. There was confusion among historians about his name and family. Some called him Nasīr al-Dīn Mahmūd,[3] while some thought of him as son of Fath Shāh.[4] Later discovery of his coins removed all confusions about this ruler.

[3] M.M. Ali, op. cit., p. 179.
[4] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 129.

## Coin B-50-01

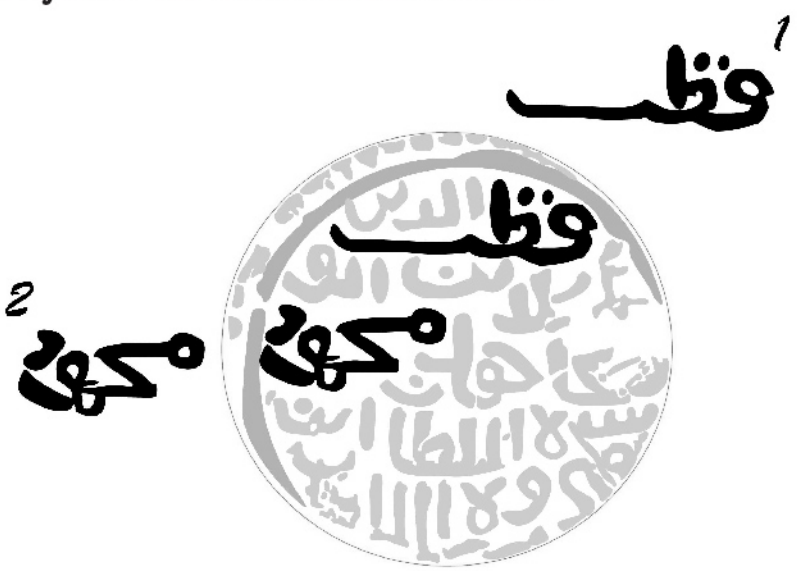
### Silver Tanka

**Obverse:** *Qutb al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l mujāhid mahmūd shāh al-sultān ibn firūz shāh al-sultān*

**Reverse:** Shahada, Mint: Dār-al nūr, Date (8)96

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Kufic al-Bangalia*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | قطب | *qutb* |
| 2 | | محمود | *mahmūd* |

# SHAMS AL-DĪN MUẔAFFAR SHĀH

## (AH 896-9/CE 1490-3)

Sidi Badr Diwana, a Habshi high official killed Qutb al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh and upheld himself as sultān of Bengal taking the title Shams al-Dīn MuẔaffar Shāh. He was the last Habshi ruler in Bengal Sultānate in AH 896 (CE 1490). His reign was full of unrest especially from army. He was killed by Syed Husain Ashraf who was originally from Mecca.

## Coin B-51-01

### Silver Tanka

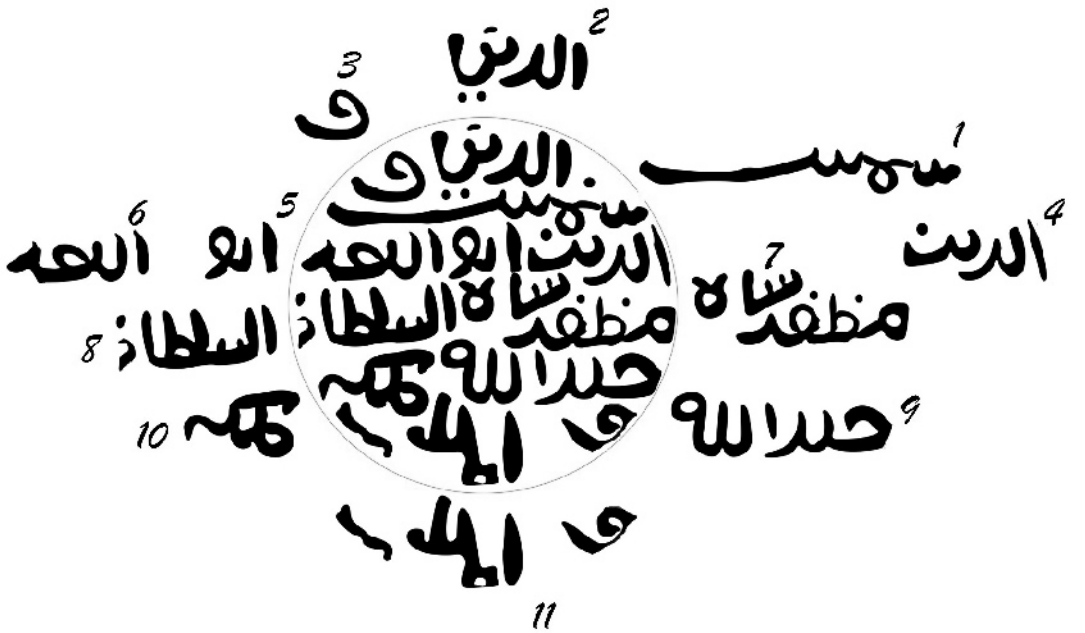
**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Legend in the field,
*shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū al-nas'r muẔaffar shāh al-sultān khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu*

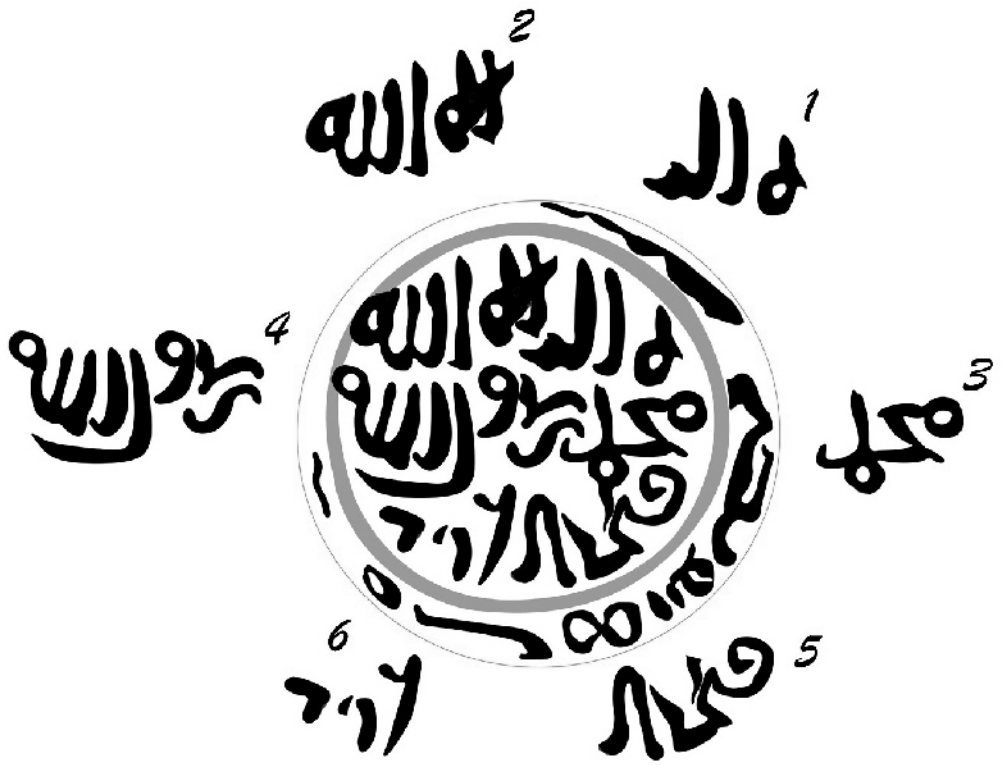
Shahāda in the central field in the top two lines,
Mint: Fathābād
Date: 896

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | شمس | *shams* |
| 2 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 3&4 | | و/الدين | *wa/al-dīn* |
| 5 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 6 | | النصر | *al-nas'r* |
| 7 | | مظفر شاه | *muẓaffar shāh* |
| 8 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 9 | | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 10 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 11 | | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | لاالہ | *lā ilaha* |
| 2 | | الا الله | *Illā allāh* |
| 3 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 4 | | رسول الله | *rasūl allāh* |
| 5 | | فتحاباد | *fathābād* |
| 6 | | ٨٩٦ | 896 |

CHAPTER 9

# HUSAIN SHĀHĪ DYNASTY

'Alā al-Dīn Husain Shāh (CE 1493-519) was an independent late medieval sultān of Bengal, who founded the Husain Shāhī dynasty that ruled Bengal until CE 1538.[1] He became the sultān of Bengal after killing the last Habshi sultān of Bengal, Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar Shāh, whom he had served as *wazir*.[2] Other rulers of this dynasty were Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh (CE 1519-31), 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (CE 1531-2) and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (CE 1532-8).

| Serial No. | Name of the Coin Issuing Authority | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 52 | 'Alā al-Dīn Hussain Shāh | 899-925 | 1493-1519 |
| 53 | Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh (s/o Hussain Shāh) | 925-38 | 1519-31 |
| 54 | 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (s/o Nusrat Shāh) | 938-9 | 1531-2 |
| 55 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (s/o Husain Shāh) | 939-45 | 1532-8 |

## Husain Shāhī Monetary System and Politics

About dates of Husain Shāhī coins Goron and Goenka (2001) says, 'during the reign of Husain Shāh and his immediate successors, the dates found on the coins are often fixed or fictitious, or sometimes deliberately illegible. This was presumably done to prevent or reduce the discounting of coins according to their date of issue (the batta system).'[3] An interesting observation is, all the coins issued from Fathabād mint of this reign bear date 899 or even more confusingly 89. Coins of Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh shows either the fixed accession date AH 925 or a garbled one with a few exceptions like Muhammadabād, where the mint shows actual dates.[4]

Even more confusion about dates have been observed in case of coins of Nusrat Shāh and his brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd, where it is found that many of the coins of both have been dated earlier than their dates of accession in the year AH 925 and 939 respectively.[5] According to Goron and Goenka (2001), while Muhammadabād mint was very reliable mint for dates, that issued coins of Mahmūd Shāh dated AH 933-5.[6]

[1] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., pp. 231-57.
[2] *Tarikh-i-Firishtah,* Tr. Into English by Briggs, j., under caption 'History of the rise of the Mahomedan Power in India till the year 1612 A.D., 4 vols., London, 1829, in Murtaja Baseer, op. cit., pp. 103-104.
[3] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 232.
[4] Ibid., op. cit., p. 242.
[5] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 156; S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 255 shows B913 with dates 912 AH and 923 AH, also B917 type with 923 AH.
[6] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 252.

Based on that the same authors infer, 'this suggests that Mahmūd was permitted to strike coins in his own name during the reign of his elder brother, Nusrat Shāh. He may well have been given a share in the administration of the sultānate.'[7] A few authors like Edward Thomas and Blochann considered these coins as have been caused by rebellion act against the reigning sultān.[8] While, Syed Ejaz Hussain (2003) commented, 'But these explanations of rebellion or dual sovereignty do not appear to fit the situation during the Husain Shāhī period. Most probably these numismatic evidences indicate the sharing of the prerogative of striking coins with the Princes who were not only actively associated with the state's administration but had successfully commanded the royal army during different military expeditions and had secured a number of victories.[9] Syed Ejaz Hussain (2003) mentions about coins of Nusrat Shāh of the year AH 918 and 920, which he argues have been caused by declaration of his name by Husain Shāh as the heir-apparent. Similar is the case of Mahmūd Shāh, who had been declared by Nusrat Shāh as the heir-apparent. This 'share of administration' and overlapped dates of issued coins from a much 'reliable mint for dates' presents an interesting and exceptional feature of political situation in both Bengal and in the subcontinent too.

## 'ALĀ AL-DĪN HUSAIN SHĀH

### (AH 899-925/CE 1493-519)

Bengal entered in its most prosperous period with the reign of 'Alā al-Dīn Husain Shāh (AH 899-925/CE 1493-519). He is famous for a number of expeditions that consolidated the power of Bengal Sultānate in the region. From historical records it is in our knowledge that Bengal encroached in its neighboring kingdoms or in occasions created political influences over them by some moves even from the time of much earlier sultāns of Bengal than him. One such record have been mentioned by Aye Chan (2005) who reveals that King *Min Saw Mon* who was the founder of *Mrauk*-U dynasty (CE 1430-1784) of Arakan, received shelter of Bengal sultāns, when he was exiled from his country and lived there for twenty four years. He also regained the throne with military assistance from Bengal Sultānate.[10] It is very likely that, later sultāns of Bengal who consolidated power of Bengal Sultānate in the later part had more or stronger influences over neighboring kingdoms. It is also very likely that, sultāns of Bengal had got involved into war or strategic conflicts with them in several occasions. For instance Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak had an inconclusive war with Kamta and later on Bengal Sultānate was succeeded by a number of weak sultāns and afterward shattered by turmoil due to power clash between Habshi usurpers. That strengthened most powerful Khen ruler of Kāmru (Kamrup), Nilāmbar, who consolidated his power in the region and conducted a military campaign towards Bengal that created a threat for Bengal. Rulers earlier than Husain Shāh such as Jalāl al-Dīn Fath and Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar Shāh led military campaigns to make sure that Nilāmbar is forced to stop his further advancement to Bengal territory. After becoming sultān of Bengal, Husain Shāh decided to undertake a military expedition to Kāmru. Goron and Goenka (2001)

[7] Ibid., op. cit., p. 252.
[8] Please see in S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 156-7.
[9] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 157.
[10] A. Chan (2005), The development of a Muslim enclave in Arakan (Rakhine) state of Burma (Myanmar), SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research, vol 3. no. 2 p. 398

presents a series of victory type coins, four in kinds such as first victory type, second victory type, third victory type and fourth victory type, that claims Husain Shāh's victory over the regions. The first and second victory type coins claim that Husain Shāh conquered Kāmru and Kāmta,[11] while the third victory type includes Jājnagar with Kāmru and Kāmta.[12] Fourth victory type coins include Orissa with Kāmru, Kāmta and Jājnagar.[13]

Though the coins of Husain Shāh claim victory over all these regions, historians and numismatists insist that the conquest of Kāmru and Kāmta (the then capital of Kāmru)[14] took place either at the beginning of Husain Shāh's reign or even before his reign was started because the previous sultān of Bengal Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar (AH 896-9/CE 1490-3) issued coins proclaiming himself as victorious over Kamtā.[15] As Husain Shāh was an important general of Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar,[16] it is not unlikely that Husain Shāh played important role in achieving victory over Kamtā during reign of Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar or that expedition may have been completed during his reign.

About Husain Shāh's conquest over Orissa, Syed Ejaz hussain comments, '...his conquest over Orissa may suggest that his war with Orissa continued throughout his reign. However, he was successful in conquering some part of Orissa beyond Madāran....Besides, Husain Shāh's fourth type of victory tankas which call him the conqueror of the three places, viz., Kāmrup, Kamta and Jājnagar, suggest that he had obtained some military success in the bordering areas of Orissa."[17]

Combining an observation of Syed Ejaz hussain (2003) and an evidence of numismatics may create further confusion over these claims by Husain Shāh of his victory over earlier mentioned or other regions. Syed Ejaz hussain says, 'The extension of Husain Shāh's south-western boundary beyond Madāran is proved from epigraphic and numismatic evidences. Two of his stone inscriptions both dated AH 912 (CE 1506-7) and discovered from Tribeni of Hooghly district, record places like 'Arsah Sajla Mankhābād, Shāhr Simlābād (both in Burdwan district), Thana Laobla and Shāhr Hādigar(h) (both in 24-Parganas) as administrative units of Husain Shāh's Kingdom.' This information of Syed Ejaj Hussain mentions a place Arsah Sajla Mankhābād as a proof of his victory over beyond Madāran though Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak (AH 864-79/CE 1459-74) issued coins from that city well before Husain Shāh's campaign.[18] The conjecture of Abdul Karim may be drawn here that may throw some light on this issue for conclusion. He said, these coins may imply '... that the sultān inherited the legacy of hostility the kings of Kamrup and Orissa from the previous regime... (and) that they indicate continuation of hostilities."[19] Despite of a few confusions, it is clear that he

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[11] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B715-723, pp. 235-36
[12] Ibid., Coin ref. B725, pp. 236
[13] Ibid., Coin ref. B726-750, pp. 237-39
[14] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 148
[15] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B681, p. 231
[16] Ibid., p. 235.
[17] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 151-2
[18] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B502-3, p.211; S.M.I. Alam, A new mint for the sultans of Bengal, *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society,* vol. 169, 2001, p. 30.
[19] A. Karim, *Corpus of the Muslim Coins of Bengal (Down to AD 1538),* Dacca 1960, pp. 108-17; A. Karim, 'Significance of the legend al-Fath al-Kamru wa-Kamtah wa-Jajnagar wa Orissa in the coins of Alauddin Husain Shāh', *JASP Bangladesh,* XV (I) April, 1970, pp. 1-12 in S.E. Hussain, op. cit., 2003, p. 146

brought peace and prosperity in Bengal in his reign. A long series of his coins and their abundance may be evidence in favor of this argument. In the following section coins of 'Alā al-Dīn Husain shāh have been analyzed.

## Coin B-52-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia* and *Masreki*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

**Obverse**

Legend in the field,
*al-sultān al-'ādil al-bādhil walad sayyid al-mursalīn 'alā al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar husain shāh al-sultān khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu*

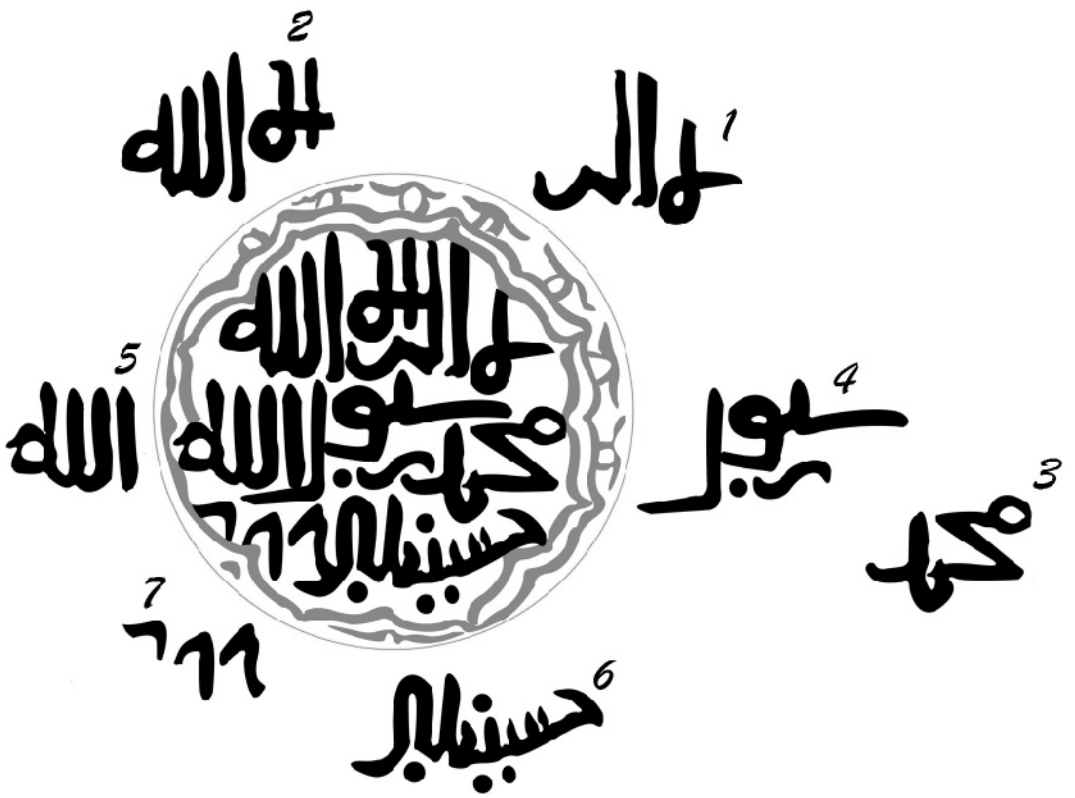
**Reverse**

Shahāda in the central field,
Mint: Husainābād
Date: 899

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | العادل | *al-'ādil* |
| 3 | | البادل | *al-bādhil* |
| 4 | | ولد | *walad* |
| 5 | | سيد | *sayyid* |
| 6 | | المرسلين | *al-mursalīn* |
| 7 | | علا | *'alā* |
| 8 | | والدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 9 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 10 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 11 | | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 12 | | حسين شاه | *husain shāh* |
| 13 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 14 | | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 15 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 16 | | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | لاالہ | لاالہ | *lā ilaha* |
| 2 | الاالله | الا الله | *Illā allāh* |
| 3 | محمد | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 4 | رسول | رسول | *rasūl* |
| 5 | الله | الله | *allāh* |
| 6 | حسینابد | حسین ابد | *husainābād* |
| 7 | ۸۹۹ | ۸۹۹ | *899* |

## Coin B-52-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Naskh, Muhaqqaq* and *Kufic al-Bangalia*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

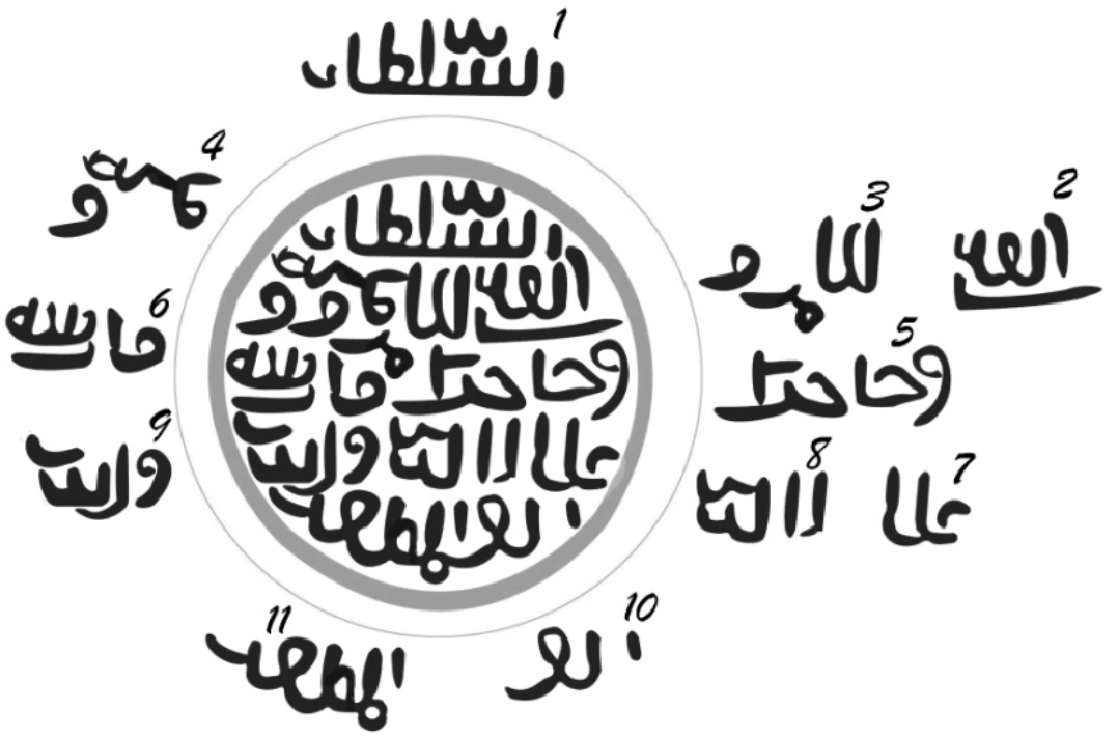
Legend in the field,
*al-sultān al-fāth al-kāmrū wa kamta wa jājnagar wa urissa 'alā al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar*

Reverse

Legend in the field,
*husain shāh al-sultān ibn sayyid ashraf al-husainī khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu*

Mint: Dār al-zarb
Date: 962 (Date error! Should be 922. Unusually keeping two same digit on different directions!)

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | الفاتح | الفاتح | *al-fāth* |
| 3 | الكامرو | الكامرو | *al-kāmrū* |
| 4 | وكمتة | وكمتة | *wa kamta* |
| 5 | وجاجنكر | وجاجنكر | *wa jājnagar* |
| 6 | واريسة | واريسة | *wa urissa* |
| 7 | علا | علا | *‘alā* |
| 8 | الدني | والدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 9 | والدين | والدين | *wa’l dīn* |
| 10 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 11 | المظفر | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | حسنشاه | حسن ساه | *husain shāh* |
| 2 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 3 | ابن | ابن | *ibn* |
| 4 | سید | سید | *sayyid* |
| 5 | اشرف | اشرف | *ashraf* |
| 6 | الحسینی | الحسنی | *al-husainī* |
| 7 | خلد | خلد | *khallada* |
| 8 | ملکه | ملکه | *mulkahu* |
| 9 | وسلطانه | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |
| 10 | دار(ال) ضرب | دار(ال) ضرب | *dār (al)-zarb* |
| 11 | ۹۶۲ | ۹٦۲ | *962* (should be 922) |

# NĀSIR AL-DĪN NUSRAT SHĀH

## (AH 925-38/CE 1519-31)

It has been mentioned earlier, Nusrat Shāh successfully conducted a number of expeditions during reign of his father and he was successful in many of those expeditions. Nusrat Shāh's ability and statesmanship made him heir-apparent to the throne. In the initial years Nusrat Shāh conducted an expedition in Tirhut, which tried to become independent from Bengal. According to a record, Nusrat Shāh attacked Tirhut in AH 933 (CE 1526-7) and killed the king Kamsanayana and annexed the whole of Tirhut to Bengal Sultānate.[20] Commemorating the plunder of Tirhut, the sultān issued a coin inscribing Tirhut Mardan, which means plunder of Tirhut.[21] His son 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (AH 938-9/CE 1531-2) and his brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd (AH 939-45/CE 1532-8) issued coins with Tirhut Mardan legend.[22] It is not clear whether they were involved in the expedition during Nusrat Shāh or had just commemorated the victory of the dynasty.

### Coin B-53-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

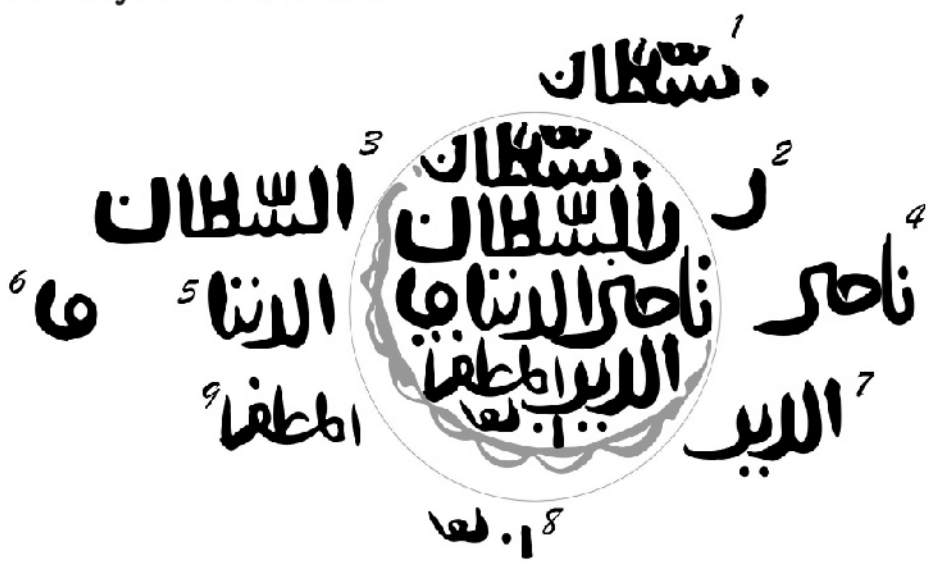
Legend in scalloped margin,
*al-sultān bin al-sultān nāsir al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar*

[20] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 158.
[21] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., B841, p.248.
[22] Ibid., B883, p.252 and B937, p.257 respectively.

Reverse

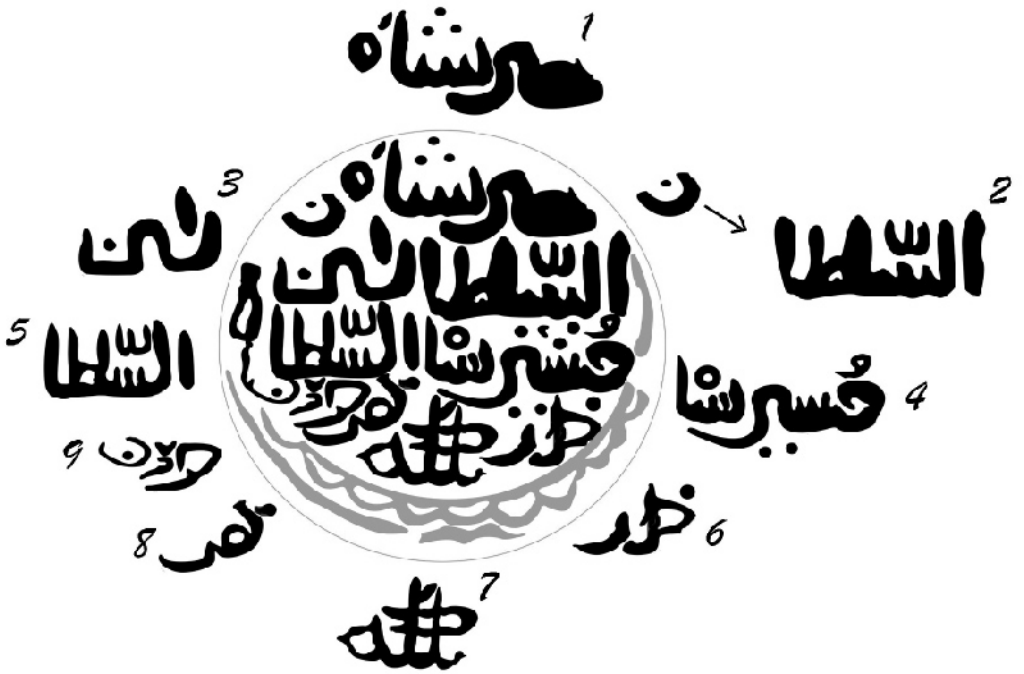
Legend in scalloped margin,
*nusrat shāh al-sultān bin husain shāh al-sultān khallada mulkahu*
Mint: Tirhut mardan

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | بن | *bin* |
| 3 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 4 | | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 5 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 6 | | و | *wa* |
| 7 | | الدين | *al-dīn* |
| 8 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 9 | | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | نصرتشاه | *nusrat shāh* |
| 2 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 3 | | بن | *bin* |
| 4 | | حسن ساه | *husain shāh* |
| 5 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 6 | | خلد | *khallada* |
| 7 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 8 | | ترهت | *tirhut* |
| 9 | | مردن | *mardan* |

## Coin B-53-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia* and *Muhaqqaq*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

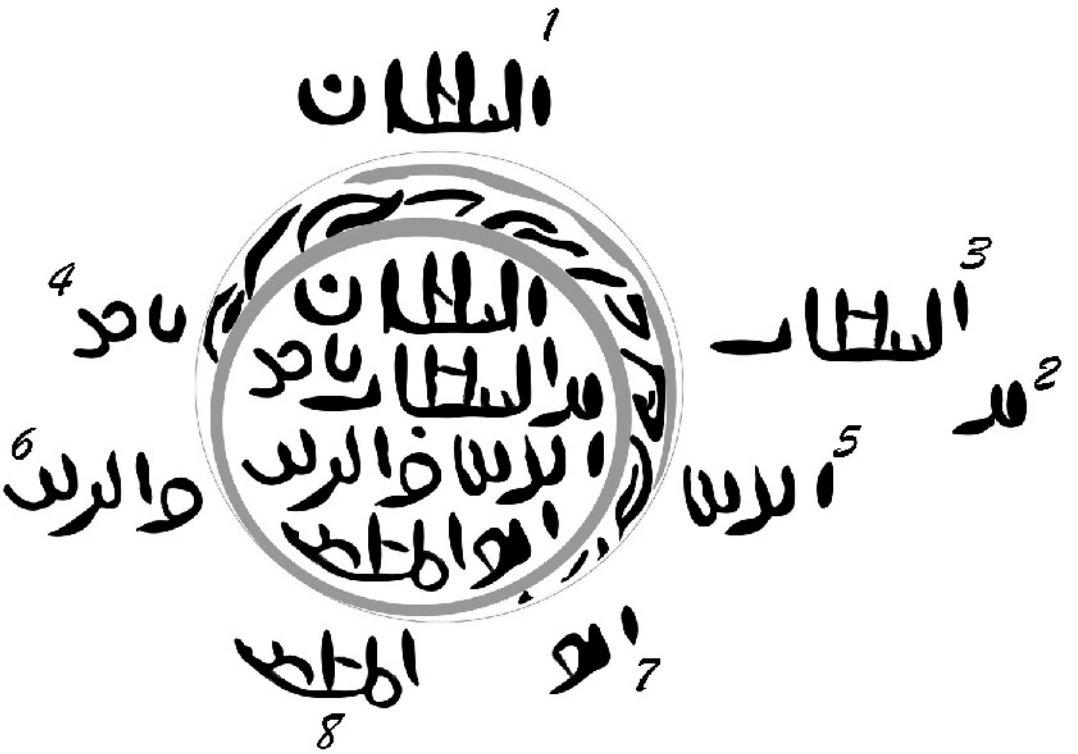
Obverse

Legend in the field,
*al-sultān bin al-sultān nāsir al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar*

Reverse

Legend in the field,
*nusrat shāh sultān bin husain shāh sultān khallada mulkahu wa sultānahu*
Date: 926

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | بن | بن | *bin* |
| 3 | السلطان | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 4 | ناصر | ناصر | *nāsir* |
| 5 | الدنيا | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 6 | والدين | والدين | *w'al-dīn* |
| 7 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 8 | المظفر | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | نصرتشاه | *nusrat shāh* |
| 2 | | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 3 | | بن | *bin* |
| 4 | | حسن ساه | *husain shāh* |
| 5 | | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 6 | | خلد | *khallada* |
| 7 | | ملکه | *mulkahu* |
| 8 | | سلطانه | *sultānahu* |
| 9 | | ۹۲۶ | *926* |

# ‘ALĀ AL-DĪN FĪRŪZ BIN NUSRAT
## (AH 938-9/CE 1531-2)

Fīrūz bin Nusrat was raised in the sultānate of Bengal in the year AH 938 (CE 1531). During his reign he took a few military expeditions to expand the boundary of Bengal Sultānate, while most of them failed and geographical boundary of the sultānate came down to its original limit.[23] Though Fīrūz bin Nusrat had a short reign, his coins are found in abundance from various mints. It indicates that during his reign the sultānate was in its normalcy in economic and military activities.

### Coin B-54-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia al-me'dania* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

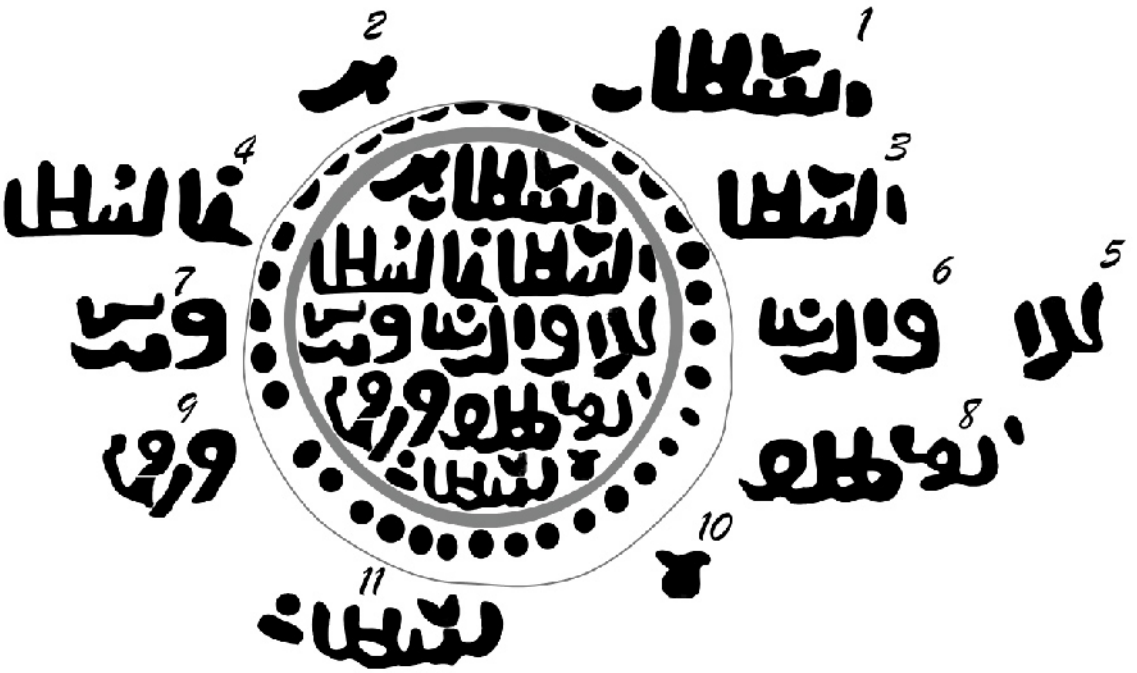
Legend in the field,
*al-sultān bin al-sultān bin al-sultān ‘alā wa’l dunyā wa’l dīn abū’l muẓaffar fīrūz shāh al-sultān*

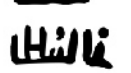
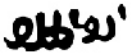
Reverse

Legend in the field,
*bin nusrat shāh al-sultān bin husain shāh al-sultān husaini khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultān*
Mint: khazānah

[23] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., p. 166.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | بن | *bin* |
| 3 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 4 |  | بن السلطان | *bin al-sultān* |
| 5 | | علا | *‘alā* |
| 6 | | والدني | *wa'l dunyā* |
| 7 | | والدين | *wa’l dīn* |
| 8 |  | ابوالمظفر | *abū’l muẓaffar* |
| 9 | | فيروز | *fīrūz* |
| 10 | | (شا)ه | *shāh* |
| 11 |  | السلطان | *al-sultān* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | بن | *bin* |
| 2 | | نصرتشاه | *nusrat shāh* |
| 3 | | السلطان بن | *al-sultān bin* |
| 4 | | حسين | *husain* |
| 5 | | شاه السلطان | *shāh al-sultān* |
| 6 | | حسني | *husaini* |
| 7 | | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 8 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 9 | | وسلطان | *wa sulṭān* |
| 10 | | خزانه | *khazānah* |

# GHIYĀTH AL-DĪN MAHMŪD SHĀH

## (AH 939-45/CE 1532-8)

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd is considered as the last independent sultān of Bengal. Though after this ruler a few who came from Afghan dynasty declared themselves as independent sultāns of Bengal, probably they failed to create a strong foothold and their reign was not stable enough to call them as independent. Reign of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd was full of trouble. Mahmūd was known as Abū'l Badr and he issued a series of coins with legend *Badr Shāhī.* He was nominated as 'heir-apparent' to the throne by the then sultān and his brother Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat Shāh in the year AH 933 (CE 1526-7).[24] As a result, most of his coins that have come out so far, are dated AH 933 and onward.[25] A few coins are dated even before AH 933.[26] After death of Nāsir al-Dīn Nusrat, he could not secure his position as sultān because of hostility of a group of nobles. Mahmūd had to seize power by killing contestants, such as 'Alā al-Dīn Bibban Shāh and 'Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz, both son of Nusrat Shāh,[27] who declared themselves as sultān of Bengal. But this conflict attracted external forces like the Afghans, the Mughals and the Portuguese to take advantage and gain foothold in Bengal. Mahmūd, who became weak from inside due to internal conflicts, had to face attack of all these forces in disintegration and ultimately he succumbed to them. He was defeated at the hand of the Sher Shāh's force and that ended a 'liberal, prosperous and peaceful rule' of Husain shāhī dynasty in Bengal.[28]

## Coin B-55-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia* and *Muhaqqaq*

[24] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., 2003, p. 168.
[25] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., coin ref. B890-943, pp. 253-7.
[26] Ibid., coin ref. B913, B917, p. 255.
[27] Ibid., coin ref. B868, B870-87, p. 250-2.
[28] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., 2003, p. 176.

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

Legend in the field surrounding central circle,
*al-sultān bin al'sultān ghiyāth al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar mahmūd*

In the central circle,
*badr shāhī*

Reverse

Legend in the field surrounding central circle,
*shāh al-sultān bin husain shāh al'sultān khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu*

In the central circle,
*badr shāhī*
Mint: Dār__?
Date: 933

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | بن | *bin* |
| 3 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 4 | | غياث | *ghiyāth* |
| 5 | | الدني | *al-dunyā* |
| 6 | | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 7 | | ابوالمظفر | *abū'l muẓaffar* |
| 8 | | محمود | *mahmūd* |
| 9 | | بدر | *badr* |
| 10 | | شاهي | *shāhī* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Modern Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 2 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 3 | | بن | *bin* |
| 4 | | حسين | *husain* |
| 5 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 6 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 7 | | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 8 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 9 | | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |
| 10 | | دار | *dār* |
| 11 | | ٩٣٣ | 933 |
| 12 | | بدر | *badr* |
| 13 | | شاهي | *shāhī* |

CHAPTER 10

# MUGHAL AND SŪRĪ INTERLUDE

At the time of conflict between Sher Shāh Sūrī and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh, Humāyūn with his army marched towards Bengal and captured Lakhnautī for a while. Humāyūn was lured by the beauty and luxury of Lakhnautī.[1] He stayed in Bengal for around nine months[2] and was busy in pleasure and merry-making while a situation at Delhi made him to decide to leave Bengal. He left for Agra deploying Jahāngir Quli Beg as the governor. Later, the army of Sher Shāh defeated Humāyūn. Earlier than this, in CE 1538 Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd was defeated by Sher Shāh Sūrī (CE 1538-9), who founded the Sūrī dynasty (CE 1538-54) by defeating Humāyūn and ruled Bengal along with other part of India. Khidr Khan (CE 1539-41) was appointed as governor of Bengal when Sher Shāh ascended the throne of Delhi. Khidr Khan attempted to declare independence from Delhi in CE 1541 and as a result, Sher Shāh replaced him with Qazi Fazilat (CE 1541-5). Later Muhammad Khan Sūr (CE 1545-54) was appointed as the governor of Bengal by the Delhi Sultān Islām Shāh Sūrī, son of Sher Shāh.

| Serial No. | Name of the Coin Issuing Authority | Reign over Bengal | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 56 | Humāyūn (Mughal Emperor of India) | 945 | 1538-9 |
| 57 | Sher Shāh (Emperor of India) | 945-52 | 1538-45 |
| 58 | Islām Shāh (Emperor of India) | 952-60 | 1545-52 |
| 59 | Muhammad ʻĀdil (Emperor of India) | 960 | 1552 |

## HUMĀYŪN

### (AH 945/CE 1538-9)

During his short stay in the Bengal expedition Humāyūn issued coins from Bengal with the mint name ʻAdl Bangāla. He issued coins of two standards, one in tanka and another in heavier rupee. Single date available on his Bengal issues is AH 945 (CE 1538-9).

[1] S.E. Hussain, op. cit., pp. 184-5.
[2] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 257.

## Coin B-56-01

### Silver Tanka[3]

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Thuluth*

For the purpose of comparison, the following coin has been used as reference.

## Coin B-56-02

### Silver Tanka[4]

[3] Classical Numismatic Group, LLC (CNG), Auction 93, Lot 1580, May 22, 2003. Retrieved on 2 October, 2019 from www.cngcoins.com.

[4] Todywalla Auctions, Auction 94, Lot 157, April 17, 2015. Retrieved on 2 October, 2019 from www.todywallaauctions.com

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin B-56-01**

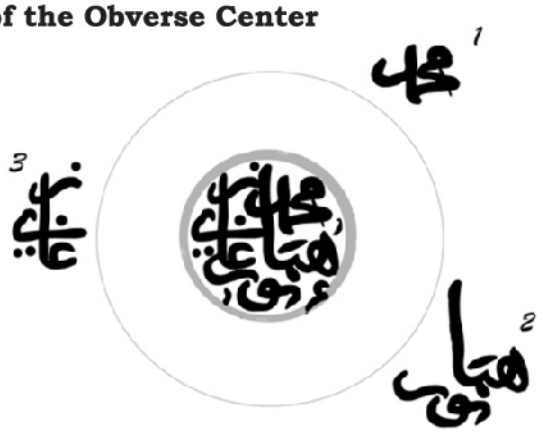
Obverse

In the center,
*muhammad humāyūn ghāzī,*
on the margin,
*al-sultān al-a'ẓam (wa) al-khāqān al-mukarram khallada allāh dhātahu (wa) mulkahu wa sultānahu*
Mint: 'Adl bangāla

Reverse

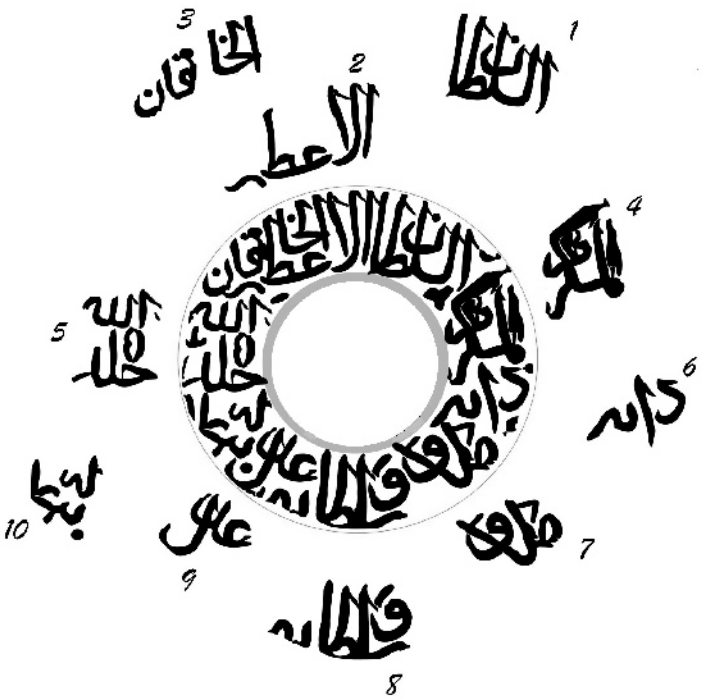
In the center shahāda followed by,
*yarzaq allāh man tasha' bi-ghair hisāb*
on the margin,
*ba-sadiq abā bakr ba-'adil 'umar ba-hiyā 'uthmān bi-'ilm 'alī radī allāh 'anhum*

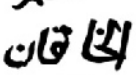
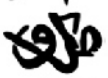
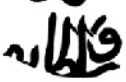
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse Center**



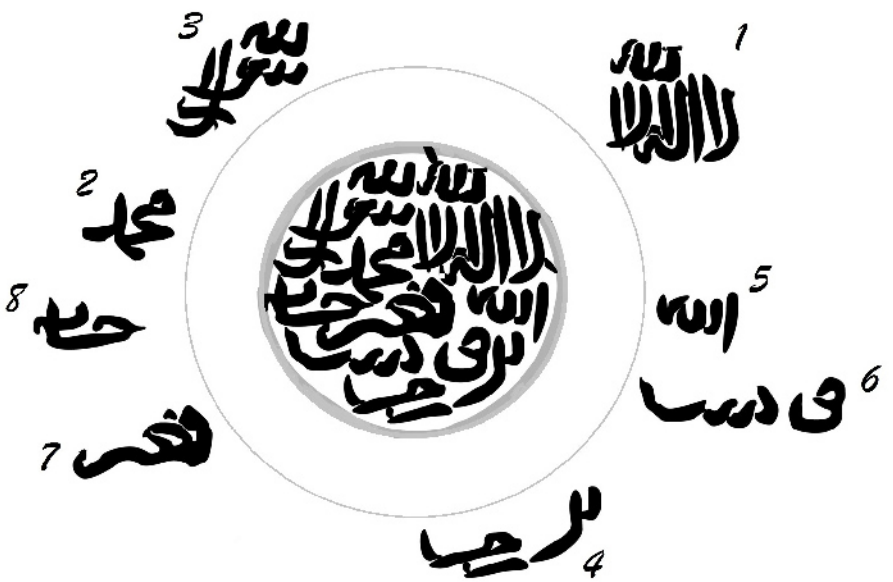

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 2 | | همايون | *humāyūn* |
| 3 | | غازي | *ghāzī* |

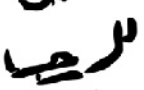
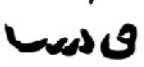
**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse Margin**



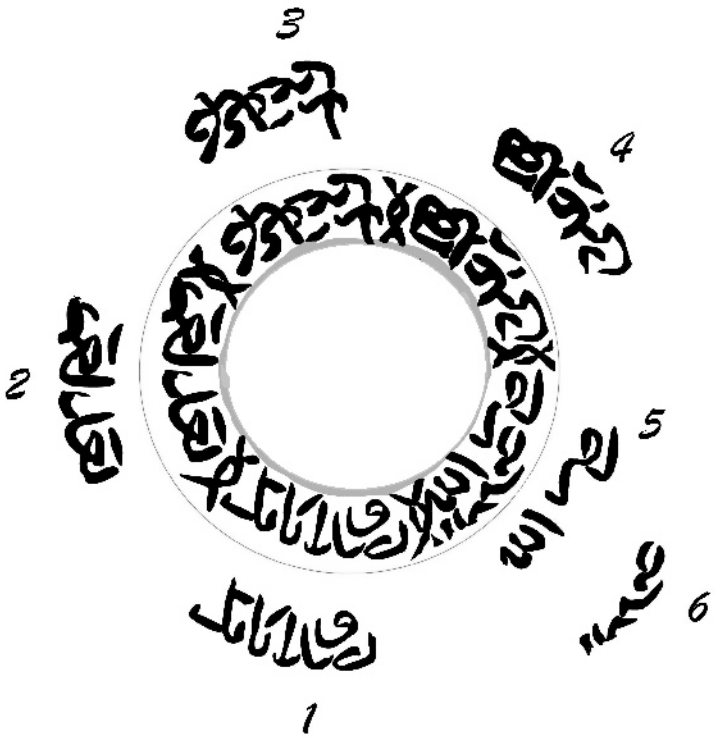
| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 2 | | الاعظم | *al-aʿẓam* |
| 3 |  | الخاقان | *al-khāqān* |
| 4 | | المكرم | *al-mukarram* |
| 5 | | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 6 | | ذاته | *dhātahu* |
| 7 |  | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 8 |  | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |
| 9 | | عدل | *ʿadl* |
| 10 | | بنكاله | *bangāla* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Center**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | لااله الاالله | *lā ilaha illā allāh* |
| 2 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 3 | | رسول الله | *rasūl allāh* |
| 4 |  | يرزق | *yarzaq* |
| 5 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 6 |  | منتشأ | *man tasha'* |
| 7 | | بغير | *bi-ghair* |
| 8 | | حساب | *hisāb* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse Margin**




| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | بصدق ابابکر | *ba-sadiq abā bakr* |
| 2 | | بعدلعمر | *ba-ʻadil ʻumar* |
| 3 | | بحیای عثمان | *ba-hiyā ʻuthmān* |
| 4 | | بعلم علی | *bi-ʻilm ʻalī* |
| 5 | | رضي الله | *radī allāh* |
| 6 | | عنهم | *ʻanhum* |

## SHER SHĀH

### (AH 945-52/CE 1538-45)

Sher Shāh defeated Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mahmūd in the year AH 945 (CE 1538), while immediately after that he had to get engaged with the Royal army of the Emperor Humāyūn of Delhi. He deployed Khidr Khan Turk as the governor in Bengal. Sher Shāh defeated Humāyūn and became the Emperor of India. His governors issued coins from Bengal in the name of Sher Shāh. A few of his coins have been analyzed in this section.

## Coin B-57-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth, Muhaqqaq, Naskh, Kufic al-Bangalia* and *nagari*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

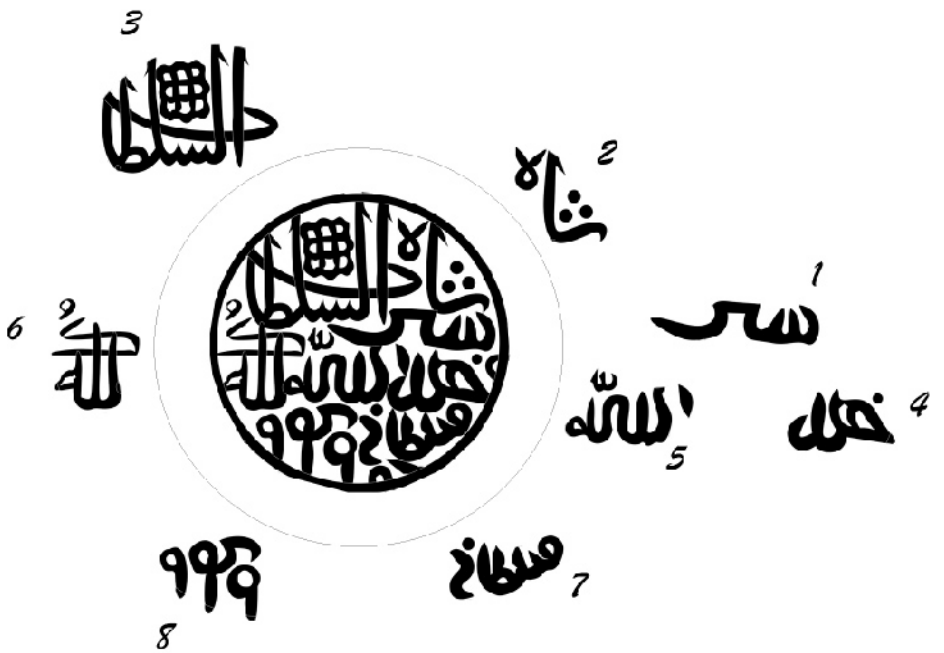
**Obverse**

Legend in the central field,
*sher shāh al-sultān khallada allāh mulka-hu wa sultānahu*
On the margin,
*farīd al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar zahā(n)panah* in Arabic and *śrī sher shāhī* in Nagari.
Date: 949

**Reverse**

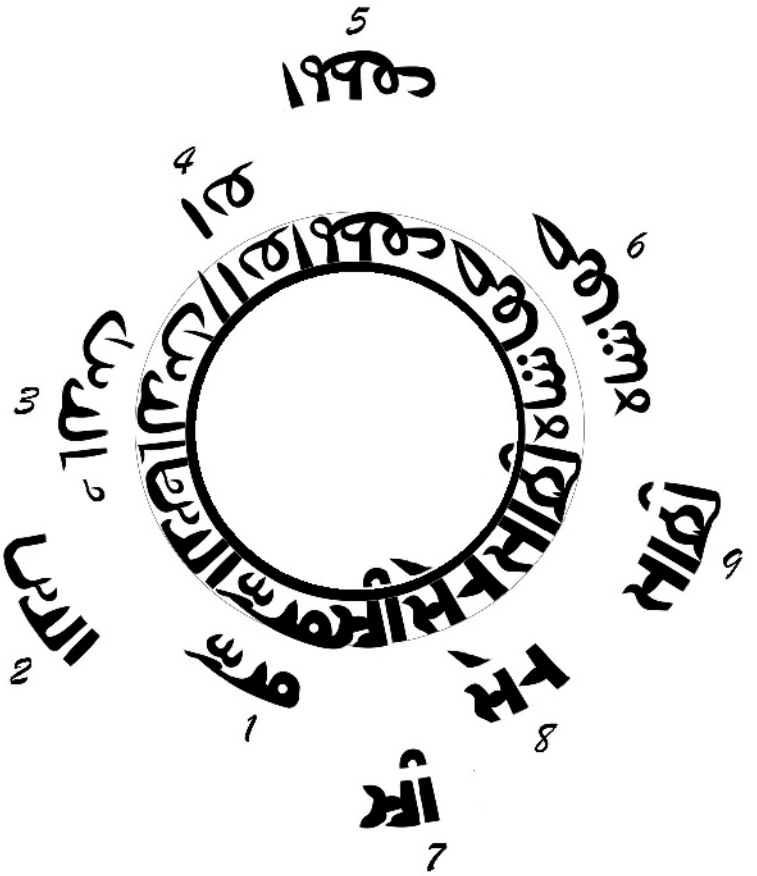
Shahāda at the center.
On the margin name of the four Caliphs.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse Central Legend**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | شير | *sher* |
| 2 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 3 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 4 | | خلد | *khallada* |
| 5 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 6 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 7 | | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |
| 8 | | ٩٤٩ | 949 |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse Margin Legend**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | فرید | فرید | *farīd* |
| 2 | الدنی | الدني | *al dunyā* |
| 3 | والدین | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 4 | ابو | ابو | *abū* |
| 5 | المظفر | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |
| 6 | جهانپناه | جهانپناه | *zahā(n)panah* |
| 7 | श्री | श्री | *śrī* |
| 8 | शेर | शेर | *sher* |
| 9 | शाही | शाही | *shāhī* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | ابوبكر | *abū bakr* |
| 2 | | عمر | *ʿumar* |
| 3 | | عثمان | *ʿuthmān* |
| 4 | | على | *ʿalī* |
| 5 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 6 | | العادل | *al ʿādil* |

## Coin B-57-02

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq, Thuluth* and *Naskh*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

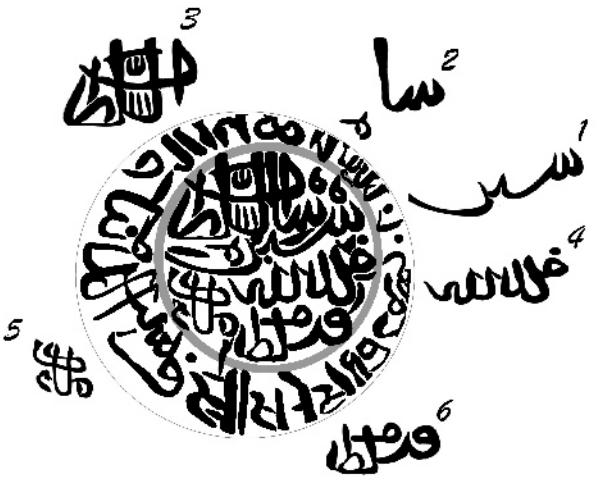
Obverse

Legend in the central field,
*sher shāh al-sultān khallada allāh mulka-hu wa sultānahu*
On the margin,
*farid al-dunyā wa'l dīn* etc. *in* Arabic and *śrī sher shāhī* in Nagari.
Date: 950

Reverse

Shahāda in the central field.
On the margin, Names of four caliphs of Islam.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse Center**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | شیر | *sher* |
| 2 | | شاہ | *shāh* |
| 3 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 4 | | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 5 | | ملکه | *mulkahu* |
| 6 | | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |

Designers and calligraphers of this type of coins are of high grade. This type is known as Jahapanah type, while the word *Jahapanah* is not written on this type. Most likely the high grade calligraphy on this coin is the result of a team work of designers with expertise in Arabic and Nagari legends, as inscriptions on both languages have been of high quality. If it was a single handed work, probably it had not been possible to achieve that quality in both languages.

## ISLĀM SHĀH

### (AH 952-60/CE 1545-52)

After death of Sher Shāh, his son Islām Shāh became the Emperor of India in the year AH 952 (CE 1545). During his reign he maintained control over Bengal by his obedient governors in Bengal. Local governors issued coins in the name of Islām Shāh. These coins are known as Bengal type coins. One such popular Bengal type coin bears number 1477. The following section analyses coin(s) issued from Bengal in the name of Islām Shāh.

## Coin B-58-01

### Silver Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Kufic al-Bangalia, Naskh* and *Nagari*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

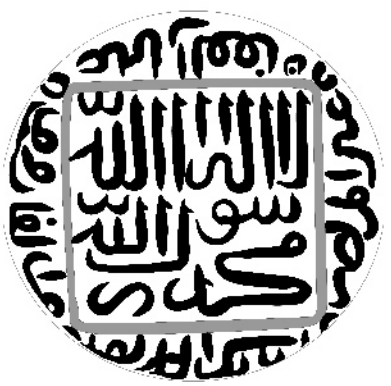
Obverse

Legend in the central field in square,
*islām shāh ibn sher shāh sultān khallada allāh mulkahu*
Date: 952

In Nagari *śri islām shāhī*

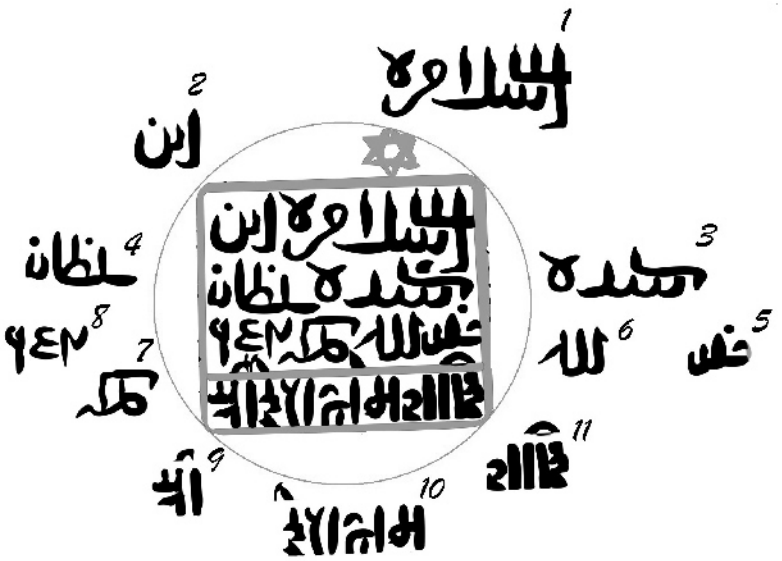
On margin from left,
*al-sultān al 'ādil/ 1477, a star symbol and a dot/ jalāl al dunyā/ wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar*

Reverse



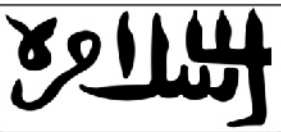
*kalima i shahāda* and name of four Caliph of Islām from bottom,
*abū bakr al-sadīq/ 'umar al-fārūq/ 'uthmān al-affān/ 'alī al-murtadyā'*

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse Central Legend**

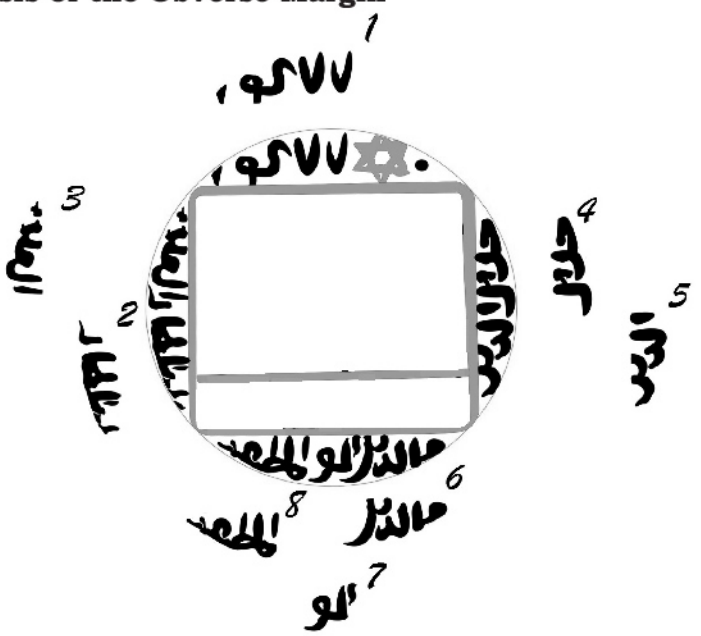


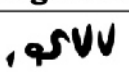
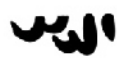
| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | اسلام شاه | *islām shāh* |
| 2 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 3 | | شير شاه | *sher shāh* |
| 4 | | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 5 | | خلد | *khallada* |
| 6 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 7 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 8 | | ٩٥٢ | 952 |
| 9 | | শ্রী | *śrī* |
| 10 | | ইসলাম | *islām* |
| 11 | | শাহী | *shāhī* |

Break-up of the section *Islām Shāh* (no. 1) has been presented in the table below.

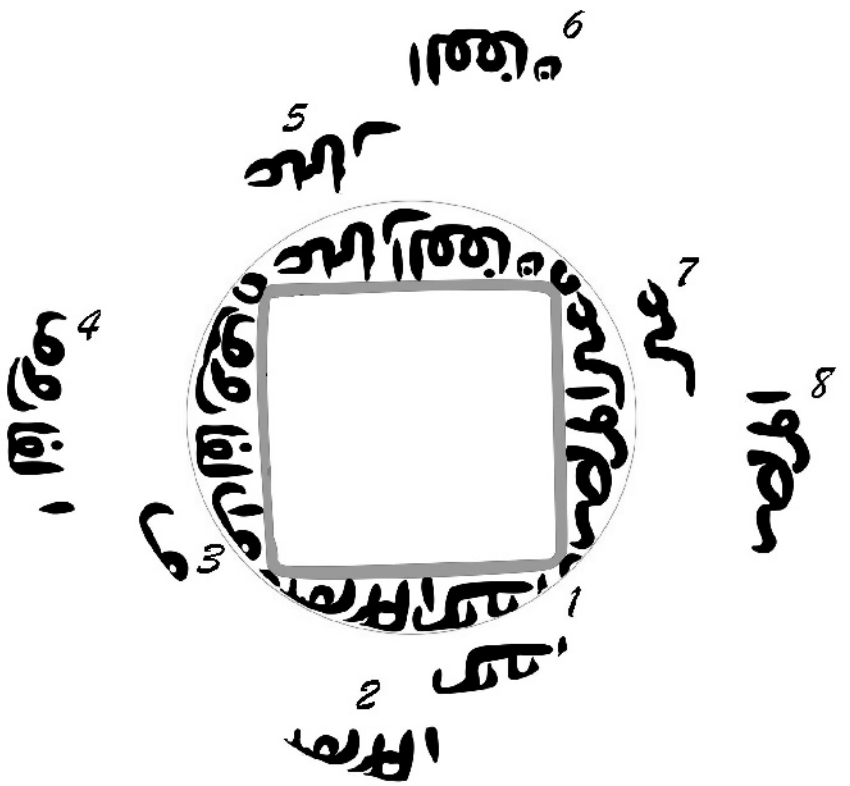
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **In complex form** |  | اسلام شاه | *islām shāh* |
| **Segregated** | | اسلام<br>شاه | *islām*<br>*shāh* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse Margin**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | ١٤٧٧ | 1477 |
| 2 | | السلطان | *al-sultān* |
| 3 | | العادل | *al ʻādil* |
| 4 | | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 5 | | والدني | *al dunyā* |
| 6 |  | والدين | *wa'l dīn* |
| 7 | | ابو | *abū* |
| 8 | | المظفر | *al-muẓaffar* |

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Reverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ابوبكر | ابوبكر | *abū bakr* |
| 2 | الصديق | الصديق | *al-sadīq* |
| 3 | عمر | عمر | *‘umar* |
| 4 | الفاروق | الفاروق | *al-fārūq* |
| 5 | عثمان | عثمان | *‘uthmān* |
| 6 | العفان | العفان | *al-‘affān* |
| 7 | علي | علي | *‘alī* |
| 8 | المرتضى | المرتضى | *al-murtadyā* |

# Interpretation of 1477 and the Star on Islām Shāh Rupee[5]

As mentioned earlier, the obverse of the coin **B-58-01** reads, starting from left section of the marginal inscription clockwise and then into the field: *'al-sultān al ā'dil/ jalāl al dunyā/ wa'l dīn abū'lmuzaffar / islām shāh ibn/ sher shāh sultān / khallada allāh mulkahu'* followed by AH 952 as the date of the coin. In the top obverse margin there is the number 1477, a star symbol and a dot. Between the obverse field and bottom margin, *śri islām shāhī* is written in Nagari. The margin of the reverse of the coin has the names of the four Caliphs of Islam from the bottom of the coin clockwise, viz. *'abū bakr al-sadīq/'umar al-fārūq/'uthmān al-'affān/'alī al-murtadyā'.* The reverse field has *kalima-i-shahāda.*

About the number 1477 inscribed in the top margin of the obverse Stan Goron and J.P. Goenka say that 'the meaning of this has not been established.'[6] Indeed, the number has remained mysterious to numismatists ever since it was first noticed. Nicholas Rhodes and S.K. Bose[7] say that 'It is interesting to note that certain rupees of Islām Shāh, with no mint name, but clearly struck in Bengal, perhaps at Tanda, have a 'pseudo date', 1477, in Arabic numerals above the reverse. These pieces are dated AH 952-60 (CE 1545-52), where as 1477 śaka = CE 1555, or three years after the end of Islām Shāh's reign. These pieces may either be posthumous issues with a pseudo AH date, struck by Nara Narayan, with his accession year indicated, or it is possible that '1477' has some meaning other than an AH date.' In this section the possibility of this coin type having some relationship with the kingdom of Cooch Behar has been tested by examining available hoard data and logic. Afterwards, some other possible explanations for the mysterious number have been proposed. The origin of the star on the coin also has not been identified and has, consequently, been less emphasized by earlier works. This section of the volume also attempts to explore a possible explanation for the star.

In seeking to achieve these objectives, it also attempted to understand uses of numbers and symbols in the Islamic cultures in the medieval period. In achieving the objective this section cites and discusses a few verses from al-Qur'an, the *abjad* numeric system, and a few quantitative calculations.

### The Possibility of Some Relationship to Cooch Behar

Based on observations of several experienced collectors, images of various groups of coins of the Sūrī dynasty discovered earlier at different times in Bangladesh and West Bengal, and analysis of the contents and provenances of the groups of images, the following observations have been made.

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[5] Originally published in 'A Star, a mysterious number and contemporary Islamic culture', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*, No. 234, 2018, pp. 23-5 by Md. Shariful Islam, the author of the volume.

[6] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p.113.

[7] N.G. Rhodes and S.K. Bose, *The Coinage of Cooch Behar,* Library of Numismatic Studies, Dhubri, 1999, p. 5.

(i) Hoards of Cooch Behar coins which come out from Rangpur region or its neighboring areas are often found with a mix of different types of Sūrī coins but where the 1477 type is less frequently seen.

(ii) Hoards of Sūrī coins that come out of the Rajshahi, Chapainawabgonj, Chittagong areas of Bangladesh and from West Bengal, usually never include any Cooch Behar coins. These hoards commonly have the 1477 type coins along with different types of coins of Sher Shāh (AH 945-52), Islām Shāh (AH 952-60), Muhammad ʻĀdil Shāh (AH 960-4), Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh (AH 963-8), Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jalāl (AH 968-71) and Dāūd Shāh Karrānī (AH 980-4) with various appropriate dates.

(iii) The 1477 type is found more frequently in Bangladesh and West Bengal and is the most frequently found type in hoards of Sūrī silver coins.

(iv) Like other Sūrī coin types, the 1477 type coins of Islām Shāh are found with different AH dates, in their case, from 952 to 960.

From these observations little possibility and connections have been observed of the Cooch Behar rulers with this type of coin. Moreover, Islām Shāh died three years earlier than '1477 śaka = CE 1555', while 1477 type coins show AH dates starting from AH 952 to 960. If this was a posthumous coin issue of Islām Shāh, it should have only the 1477 to represent the date. But these coins have the afore-mentioned specific AH dates, and, thus, will have been issued in different years during Islām Shāh's reign. It was also observed that the coin hoards have coins of Sher Shāh of different dates followed by different types of Islām Shāh coins, including 1477 type coins with different AH dates, coins of Muhammad ʻĀdil Shāh, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jalāl and Dāūd Shāh Karrānī. This surely indicates that these 1477 type coins of Islām Shāh in these hoards with their different AH dates and in the company of the coins of the other Sūrī rulers were issued from within Sūrī jurisdiction and had nothing to do with any Cooch Behar rulers.

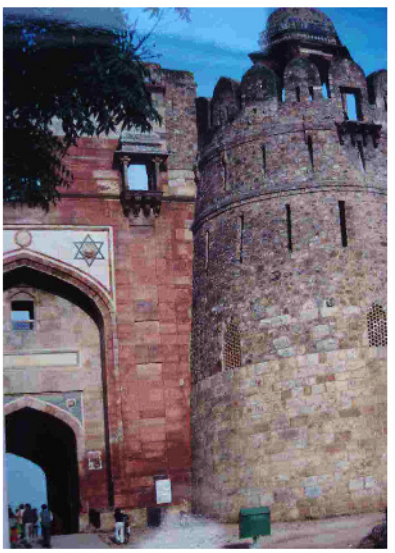
**A Plausible Explanation of the Star Symbol**

Over the centuries people have taken measures to protect themselves from the evil eye.[8] Christiane Gruber[9] states that Muslim cultures from the seventh century to the present have created a wide range of objects and artwork for the purpose of seeking spiritual blessing and physical protection. It is also observed that Islamic culture often used the symbols of prophets in artwork and talismans.[10] According to Yasmine Al-Saleh, in Islamic culture 'the representations of certain prophets are more efficacious than others, with those of Solomon being the most powerful of all.'[11] King

[8] J.H. Elliot, *Beware the Evil Eye Volume 4: The Evil Eye in the Bible and the ancient World,* Cascade Books, Oregon, 2017, pp. 1-242.
[9] C. Gruber, *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and Supernatural,* Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 2016, p. 33.
[10] Talismans are protective things like amulets.
[11] Retrieved from www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tali/hd_tali.htm on 17.09.2017.

Solomon, who was also a prophet, was famous also among Jews and Christians for his wisdom, occult knowledge and power over demons.[12] It is also noted that folklore and educated traditions related to King Solomon constitute a common cultural heritage that was shared by the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic societies alike during the middle ages.[13] John H. Elliot has discussed amulets from the Middle East from the Byzantine era with name of Solomon.[14] The six-pointed star is related to Solomon's seal, which is one of the key protective designs found in Islamic occult arts.[15] Therefore, there is at least a possibility that the star on the coin may have appeared from the same trend in Islamic culture of the medieval period to represent Solomon's seal, i.e. a protective symbol.

**Agra Fort**



**Purana Qila**

Here star at Agra fort and Puran Qila entrances are shown. Do they symbolize protective mark at the entrance?

## A Possible Explanation of the Number 1477

Christiane Gruber argues that, to devoted Muslims, the Creator and the Qur'an are considered as the best guardian and hence Muslims use verses of Qur'an in order to interact with, and invoke security from the realm of the sacred.[16] Jonah Blank shows that a significant number of Muslims use 786 to represent the first verse of Al-Qur'an *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*.[17] In fact 786 is the *abjad* numeral value of the verse. Abjad was an alphabetical numeric system. The name *abjad* came from the

[12] J.H. Elliot, op. cit., p.133.

[13] J. Verheyden, ed., *The Figure of Solomon in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Tradition, king, Sage and Architect, Brill,* Leiden, 2012 in A. Lafrate, *The Wandering Throne of Solomon: Objects, Tales of Kingship in the Medieval Mediterranean,* Brill, Danvers, 2015, p.1.

[14] J.H. Elliot, op. cit., pp. 133-5.

[15] C. Gruber, op. cit., p. 38.

[16] Ibid., p. 33.

[17] J. Blank, *Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and Modernity Among the Daudi Bohras,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001, p. 173. Note that Jonah Blank says that 786 is substituted for 'Bismillah' while 786 is abjad numeral value of the complete verse number 1:1 which reads 'Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim.'

first few letters[18] of the total 28 letters[19] used in the system. The numeric values of the letters are presented in a table below. Calculation in this system is also known as *'hisab al-'arabi'.*[20] This system was introduced in the Arab region during the pre-Islamic period and was replaced with 0-9 numbers during the 8th century CE.[21]

**Numeric Values of the Letters in the Abjad Numeric System**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1s | ا | ب | ج | د | ه | و | ز | ح | ط |
| 10s | ي | ك | ل | م | ن | س | ع | ف | ص |
| 100s | ق | ر | ش | ت | ث | خ | ذ | ض | ظ |
| 1000 | غ | | | | | | | | |

Source: Stephen Chrisomalis (2010)[22]

Jonah Blank shows that the numeral 786 is substituted to avoid the blasphemy of unintentionally showing disrespect to a word from the Qur'an.[23] The author of the volume checked several verses of the Qur'an and found that verse 56:15 has *abjad* numeric value 1477. The verse and its numeric value are presented below.

**Verse 56:15 and its Numeric Value**

عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾

Numeric value
=70+30+10+60+200+200+40+6+800+6+50+5=
1477

The verse literally means 'on thrones woven (with gold and precious stones)'. If the meaning of the verse is used to replace the number 1477 in the coin legend, the latter can be read as ***on thrones woven***[24] *'al-sultān al-'ādil/ jalāl al-dunyā/ wa'l dīn abū'l muzaffar / islām shāh ibn/ sher shāh sultān / khallada allāh mulkahu'.* Thus, while this may be a mere coincidence, the meaning of verse 56:15 when replacing the verse's *abjad* numeric value of 1477 fits well into the title of the sultān on the obverse.

**1477 and the Number 19**

It is observed that, historically, numbers have played a vital role in human civilization. Cycleback[25] shows that there is a psychological attachment of humans to numbers.

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[18] University of California, *Viator-Medieval and Renaissance Studies (Vol. 8),* Los Angeles, 1977, p. 437.

[19] S. Chrisomalis, *Numerical Notation: A Comparative History,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, P. 163; G. J. Toomer, ed., *Apollonius Conics Books V to VII: The Arabic Translation of the Lost Greek Original in the Version of the Banu Musa,* Vol. 1, Springer, Rhode Island, 1990, p. 28.

[20] University of California, op. cit., p. 437.

[21] A.D. Al-Kaheel, *The Marvels of the Number Seven in the Noble Qur'an* (ebook), Retrieved from http://ka-heel7.com/eng/index.php/numeric-miracle/449-free-book-the-marvels-of-the-number-seven, on 20.09,2017, p. 15.

[22] S. Chrisomalis, op. cit., p. 163.

[23] J. Blank, op. cit., p. 173.

[24] https://quran.com; while translated this verse as 'on couches of well-woven cloth' by M.A.S.A Haleem, *The Qur'an: A new translation,* Oxford University Press, 2005, P. 356.

[25] D. Cycleback, *A Brief Introduction to Ancient Counting Systems for the non-Mathematician,* Hamerweit Books, 2014, pp. 48-53.

The Islamic world is not beyond that influence of numbers. By browsing several internet sites the present author has observed that Islamic scholars consider 19 as an important number. Verse (74:30) of al-Qur'an literally means 'over it (in charge) are Nineteen (angels)'.[26] Based on this verse or other, Islamic scholars attempted to show the importance of 19 in al-Qur'an though there is controversy regarding their arguments.[27] Rashad Khalifa argues that 19 means 'God is one'[28] by showing that واحد *(wahid)* means 'one' and the *abjad* numeric value of واحد is 6+1+8+4=19.[29] Another observation is that, in the verse *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim* there are 19 Arabic alphabets. Allama Hafiz Emad Uddin Ibne Katheer mentions a hadith narrated by Ibn Masud that summarizes that if anybody wants to protect himself or herself from 19 guards/angels of the Hell, should recite *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim.* Each alphabet of the verse will act as protection from the (said 19) guards.[30] The verse mentioned in this section (74:30) also says, 'over it (in charge) are nineteen (angels)' followed by the verse (74:31) 'none other than angels appointed by us to guard Hellfire....'[31] By coincidence or intention, the summation of the digits in the number 1477 of the coin of the paper is 19 (1+4+7+7= 19).

**Annemarie Schimmel about 14 and 7**[32]

Annemarie Schimmel analytically shows importance of the number 7 and 14 to the spiritual Islamic world, especially to those who understands and have knowledge and insight. Annemarie Schimmel writes, 'It is not amazing that the word *wajh* (face) has the numerical value of 14 and so has the word *yad* (hand)? And there are 14 lines on the face and 14 phalanges of the hand! And 14 is the number of the disconnected letters in the Koran and half of the traditional Arabic letters.' About 7 Annemarie Schimmel brings a quote, 'The four eyelids and the two eyebrows and hair of the head- these are seven lines, O just God!'[33] Schimmel also adds, 'The *sab mathani* (the seven double verses) that are mentioned in the Koran (Sura 15/87) are likewise connected with the face in its sevenfold and fourteen fold manifestations.'[34]
To conclude the above arguments of Annemarie Schimmel, it can be summarized that, in Arabic 'face' is وجه *(wajh)* that carries *abjad* value 14 (please see the section where *abjad* value or numeric system has been discussed in detail in other part of the volume). The face is divided by nose (that represents *alif*) into two equal sides 7 on each side. Therefore, it is not unlikely that the designer of the coin, a calligrapher, used 1477 mysteriously to represent human face. Allāh knows better and the right thing that happened in this case.

[26] M.M.H., Rahman, *Shabde Shabde Al Quran,* Adhunik Prokashani, Dhaka, 2014, p. 331; while translated this verse as 'there are nineteen in charge of it.' by M.A.S.A Haleem, op. cit., p. 397.
[27] A.D. Al-Kaheel, *The Marvels of the Number Seven in the Noble Qur'an* (ebook), Retrieved from http://kaheel7.com/eng/index.php/numeric-miracle/449-free-book-the-marvels-of-the-number-seven, on 20.09,2017, p. 11-21.
[28] J.H. Elliot, op. cit., p. 107 shows that one of the protective spoken or written formulas included among medieval Christian amulets is also 'There is one God'
[29] R. Khalifa, *Quran: Visual Presentation of the Miracle,* Mosque of Tucson, Arizona, 1982, p. 243; While according to A.D. Al-Kaheel, op. cit., pp. 15-8, it is not a good idea to relate *Abjad* numeric values to verses from al-Qur'an to prove its miracle.
[30] Allama Hafiz Emad Uddin Ibne Katheer, *Tafsir Ibn Katheer,* (tr. by Dr. Muhammad Mujibur Rahman, 2008) First, Second and Third volume, Tafseer Publication Committee, Dhaka, Pp. 77-78; *Tafsir Ibn Katheer,* (tr. by Hafiz Munir Uddin Ahmed (ed.), 2018 volume 1, Al Quran Academy Publications, London. p. 90.
[31] M.A.S.A Haleem, op. cit., p. 397.
[32] This section was not included in the original paper.
[33] Huart, Houeoufis, pp. 63, 64, 284 in A. Schimmel, op. cit., p. 106.
[34] A. Schimmel, op. cit., p. 106.

**Linking the star and 1477**

Establishing a relation with the number 1477 is not without its pitfalls. As said earlier, verse 56:15 with its *abjad* value of 1477 literally means 'on thrones woven (with gold and precious stones)', while, according to Allegra Lafrate, among the objects associated with King Solomon's glorious renown, his throne was the most extraordinary.[35] King Solomon's throne is said to have been the most wonderful among the thrones that any king had ever sat upon.[36] The throne was made in gold and ivory[37] and was ornamented with precious stones.[38] Therefore, the theme of verse 56:15 and the most magnificent of objects of King Solomon, the ornamented throne, are related.[39] Here the possibility is that the star was used because it was thought to best represent the King than any other of his objects. This volume also imagines an alternative possible connection between 19 angels of the Hell mentioned in the verse 74:30 of the al-Qur'an; the hadith mentioned by Ibne Katheer that relates 19 alphabets of the verse *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim* with protection form angels/guards of the Hell; use of *abjad* value 786 by Muslims to represent the verse *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*; possibility of the number 1477 as an *abjad* value that may or may not have connection with the verse 56:15; summation of the digits of the number 1477 as 19 that may symbolize itself as a protective number; and the six pointed star that may have a connection with the king Solomon's seal as protective mark.

It is also possible, however, that there is no association between 1477 and the star. Even if we suppose that they are not associated with each other, there is still the possibility that the star represents a protective mark as noted by Christiane Gruber.[40] Also the possibility of the number 1477 as an *abjad* value and its connection to the verse 56:15 and/or the summation of the digits of the number being 19 as a symbolic protective number still remain plausible. After the death of Islām Shāh, a very similar type of coin was issued by Muhammad 'Ādil Shāh (AH 960-964), which is listed by Goron and Goenka as D1105.[41] This type does not include the number 1477 in its marginal inscription but does include the star and the dot immediately after the name of the Sultān 'Muhammad' in *Nagari* script at the bottom of the obverse. An example of this type coin is illustrated later as coin **B-59-01**. On that coin placing the star with the name of the sultān may be a case of using the star as a protective symbol, while, on the coins of Islām Shāh, the protective symbolism may have been attached to the throne of the sultān or both. Of course, there is always the possibility that the star is simply a mint mark!

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[35] A. Lafrate (2015), *The Wandering Throne of Solomon: Objects, Tales of Kingship in the Medieval Mediterranean,* Brill, Danvers, pp. 2-3.

[36] www.chabad.org, retrieved on 22.09.2017.

[37] A. Lafrate (2015), op. cit., p.9.

[38] www.chabad.org, retrieved on 22.09.2017.

[39] While searching for descriptions of the throne of the King Solomon, the present author noticed that a few internet resources mention 14 kinds of animals and birds, the names of 7 fathers of the world (prophets) and the names of 7 pious men on the throne of King Solomon. These numbers mysteriously resemblethe number 1477 on the coin. Also the Solomon's star is in line with the possible indication of the description of the throne of the King Solomon by the number 1477 (www.chabad.org, retrieved on 22.09.2017; www.oztorah.com, retrieved on 22.09.2017).

[40] C. Gruber, op. cit., p. 38.

[41] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., p. 129.

This discussion presents plausible conjectures, based admittedly on limited research that may precisely explain the number and the symbol on the coins under discussion. Others may deem these conjectures to be fanciful and be able to put forward more cogent arguments and suggestions. Whether the dot at the side of the star has any particular significance is not known. It does, in any case, occur on other coin types of Islām Shāh and Muhammad ʻĀdil. Be that as it may, additional research into this matter is required for confirmations.

## MUHAMMAD ʻĀDIL

### (AH 960/CE 1552)

Muhammad ʻĀdil Shāh ascended the throne in the year AH 960 (CE 1552) that resulted in division of the Sūrī realms. A few coins were issued in the name of Muhammad ʻĀdil Shāh by local governors, while Muhāmmad Khan Sūr lodged a revolution in the later part and declared independence from Delhi. A coin of Muhammad ʻĀdil Shāh has been discussed here.

### Coin B-59-01

**Silver Rupee**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth al-me'dania* and *Nagari*. It seems normally like *Nashk,* but for some special features, it has been concluded as *Thuluth Me'dania.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

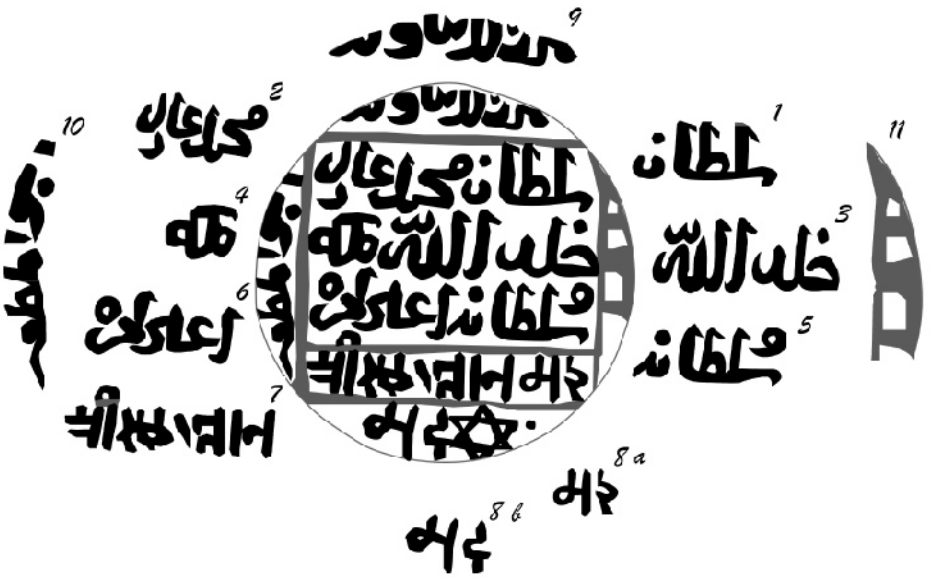
Obverse

Obverse legend in the central field inside square in Arabic,
*sultān muhammad 'ādil khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu a'lā amrahu*
In *nagari,*
*śrī sultān moh/mod*
On the margin,
*mubāriz al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar*
Date (not readable)

Reverse

Shahāda in the central field inside square and name of caliphs on the margin.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 2 | | محمد عادل | *muhammad ʻādil* |
| 3 | | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 4 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 5 | | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |
| 6 | | اعلا امره | *a'lā amrahu* |
| 7 | | শ্রী সুলতান | *śrī sultān* |
| 8 (a,b) | / | মহ/মদ | *moh/mod* |
| 9 | | مبرز الدني والدين | *mubāriz al dunyā wa'l dīn* |
| 10 | | ابو المظفر | *abū'lmuẓaffar* |
| 11 | | - | Date (not readable) |

CHAPTER 11

# MUHAMMAD SHĀHĪ DYNASTY

After the death of Islām Shāh Sūrī in CE 1552, Muhammad Khan Sūr declared independence and ruled Bengal as independent sultān from CE 1554 to 1555 taking the title Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh. His dynasty was known as Muhammad Shāhī dynasty (CE 1553-64). Other rulers of the dynasty were Shahbāz Khan (CE 1555), Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh II (CE 1555-60), Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jalāl Shāh (CE 1560-3) and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Shāh III (CE 1563-4). Sultāns who issued coins are in the following list.

| Serial No. | Name of the Coin Issuing Authority | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 60 | Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh Ghāzī | 961-3 | 1553-5 |
| 61 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh (s/o Ghāzī) | 963-8 | 1555-60 |
| 62 | Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jalāl Shāh (s/o Ghāzī) | 968-71 | 1560-3 |

## MUHAMMAD SHĀH GHĀZĪ

### (AH 961-3/CE 1553-5)

Muhāmmad Khan Sūr (AH 961-3/CE 1553-5) was one of the relatives of Sher Shāh. Islām Shāh, son of Sher Shāh, on ascending the throne of Delhi, appointed Muhāmmad Khan Sūr as governor of Bengal. As long as Islām Shāh was alive, Muhāmmad Khan remained obedient and subordinate to Islām Shāh and issued coins in the name of Islām Shāh. After death of Islām Shāh, Mubāriz Khan, son of Nizām Khan Sūr, taking the title Muhammad ʻĀdil Shāh, ascended the throne, which Muhammad Shāh did not accept and declared independence of Bengal and issued coins in his own name taking the royal title *shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar muhammad shāh ghāzi khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu.*[1] After him his sons Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur (AH 963-8/CE 1555-60) and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jalāl (AH 968-71/CE 1560-3) maintained independence of Bengal and issued coins in their own names.

[1] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B960-2, pp. 259-60.

## Coin B-60-01

### Silver Tanka

**Obverse:** *sultān muhammad shāh ghāzī khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu* at the center and *shams al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar* on the margin.

**Reverse:** Shahāda at the center and name of the four caliphs on the margin.

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Naskh*

**Analysis of the Ruler's Name and Title**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | محمد شاه | *muhammad shāh* |
| 2 | | غازی | *ghāzī* |

# GHIYĀTH AL-DĪN BAHĀDUR SHĀH

## (AH 963-8/CE 1555-60)

After death of Muhāmmad Khan Sūr his eldest son Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh declared himself as sultān. He was supported by his brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jalāl. He also received support from Tāj Khan Karrānī, later the founder of Karrānī dynasty. The joint force of Bahādur Shāh defeated Khan-i-Jahan, the younger brother of Muhāmmad Khan Sūr to occupy Gaur. They later defeated and killed Muhammad 'Ādil Shāh of Delhi, who had earlier lost Indian Empire to Mughals and in this way Bahādur Shāh consolidated supreme authority over Bengal Sultānate.

## Coin B-61-01

### Silver Rupee Standard Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth al-me'dania* and *Nagari.* It has some features of *Muhaqqaq,* but its slanting stroke shows that it is *Thuluth.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

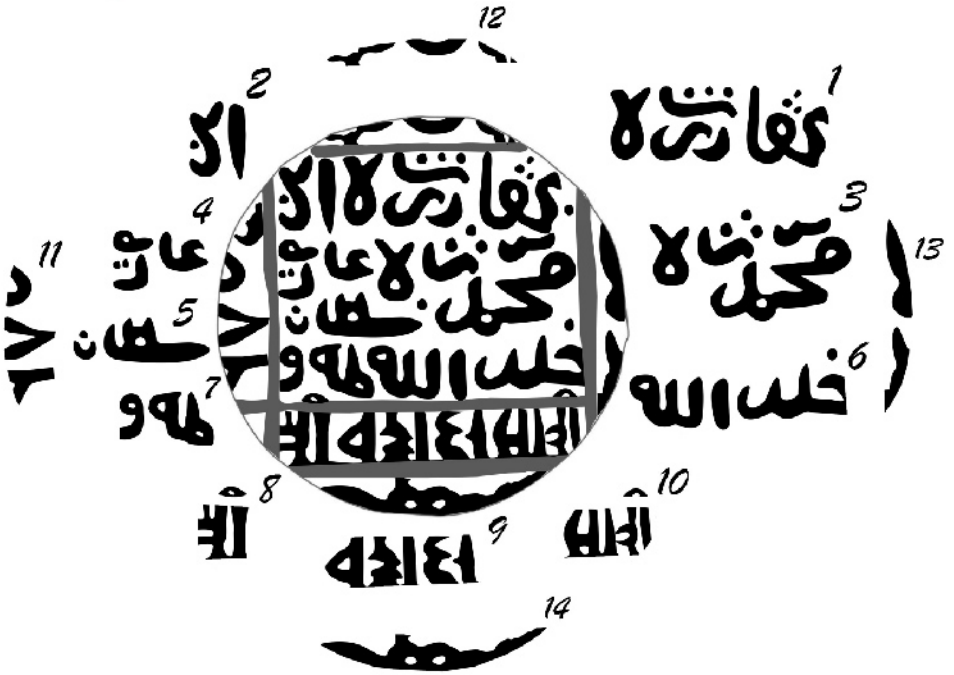
Obverse

Legend in the central field inside square,
*bahādur shāh ibn muhammad shāh ghāzī sultān khallada allāh mulkahu*
In nagari,
*śrī bahādur shāhī*
Date not read with precision.
Other inscriptions on the margin are not legible too.

Reverse

Shahāda in the central field inside square and name of caliphs on the margin.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | بهادرشة | *bahādur shāh* |
| 2 | | ابن | *ibn* |
| 3 | | محمدشة | *muhammad shāh* |
| 4 | | غازي | *ghāzī* |
| 5 | | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 6 | | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 7 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 8 | | শ্রী | *śrī* |
| 9 | | বহাদুর | *bahādur* |
| 10 | | শাহী | *shāhī* |
| 11 | | ٦٧؟ | Date (Not fully legible) |
| 12 | | | (not legible) |
| 13 | | | (not legible) |
| 14 | | | (not legible) |

## Coin B-61-02

### Silver Rupee Standard Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** *Thuluth al-me'dania* and *Nagari.* Some features like *Muhaqqaq al-me'dania* and *Naskh.*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse

Obverse legend in the central field inside square,
*bahādur shāh bin muhammad*
*shāh ghāzī khallada*
*allāh mulkahu wa sultā(nahu)*
In Nagari,
*śrī bahādur shāhī*
On the margin,
*ghiyāth al-dunyā/(w)a'l dīn al-mujāzī/*
*abū'l muẓaffar/mulk satgāon*

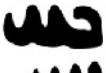
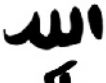
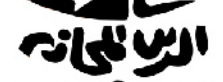
Reverse

Shahāda in the central field inside square and name of caliphs on the margin as follows,

*abū bakr ra(n) al-sadīq/ 'umar ra(n) al-fārūq lillah/ 'uthmān ra(n) annurain/ 'alī ra(n) al-murtadyā*

The reverse field has the *kalima-i-shahāda.* The margin of the reverse of the coin has the names of the four Caliphs. On this coin the margin of the reverse is partly visible, while the inscription on the reverse margin has been concluded by studying other specimens.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | بهادر شاه | *bahādur shāh* |
| 2 | | بن | *bin* |
| 3 | | محمد | *muhammad* |
| 4 | | شاه | *shāh* |
| 5 | | غادي | *ghāzī* |
| 6 |  | خلد | *khallada* |
| 7 |  | الله | *allāh* |
| 8 | | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 9 | | و سلطا | *wa sultā(nahu)* |
| 10 | | শ্রী | *śrī* |
| 11 | | বাহাদুর | *bahādur* |
| 12 | | শাহী | *shāhī* |
| 13 |  | غياث الدني | *ghiyāth al-dunyā* |
| 14 | | الدين المجازى | *(w)a'l dīn al-mujāzī* |
| 15 | | ابوالمظفر | *abū'l muẓaffar* |
| 16 | | ملك ستكانو | *mulk satkānū (satgāon)* |

# GHIYĀTH AL-DĪN JALĀL BIN MUHAMMAD

**(AH 968-71/CE 1560-3)**

Jalāl bin Muhammad occupied Bengal sultānate after death of his brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh taking the title Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jalāl Shāh. He did not maintain good relation with Tāj Khan Karrānī and entered into a conflicting relation with him. He defeated Tāj Khan Karrānī who fled and in this way Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jalāl Shāh ruled Bengal for three years.

## Coin B-62-01

**Silver Tanka**

**Calligraphic Style:** *Muhaqqaq* and *Thuluth*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

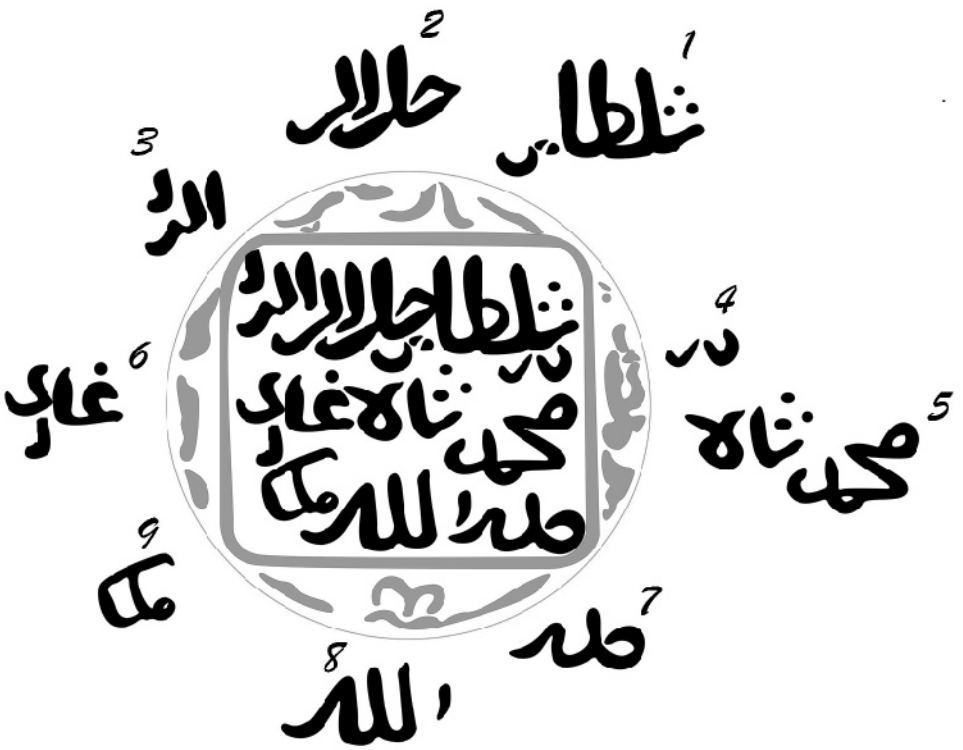
Obverse

Legend in the obverse square,
*sultān jalāl al- dīn bin muhammad shāh ghāzī khallada allāh mulkahu*

Reverse

Shahāda in the square.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**



| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | سلطان | *sultān* |
| 2 | | جلال | *jalāl* |
| 3 | | الدين | *al-dīn* |
| 4 | | بن | *bin* |
| 5 | | محمد شاه | *muhammad shāh* |
| 6 | | غازی | *ghāzī* |
| 7 | | خلد | *khallada* |
| 8 | | الله | *allāh* |
| 9 | | ملکه | *mulkahu* |

CHAPTER 12

# KARRĀNĪ DYNASTY

In 1564 CE Ghiyāth al-Dīn Shāh III was assassinated by Tāj Khan Karrānī (CE 1564-6) who established the reign of Karrānī dynasty in Bengal that continued until CE 1576. Other rulers of the Karrānī dynasty were Sulaimān Khan Karrānī (CE 1566-72), Bāyazīd Khan Karrānī (CE 1572) and Dāūd Shāh Karrānī (CE 1572-6). In the fierce battle of Rajmahal in 12 July of 1676 CE Dāūd Shāh Karrānī was defeated by the Delhi sultān Akbar the Great and that was the end of the independent Sultānate of Bengal. After his death Bengal came under the subordination of Delhi Sultānate. Until CE 1757 Bengal remained under Nawabs of the Mughal Empire of Delhi. Only known coin issuing sultān under Karrānī dynasty is Dāūd Shāh Karrānī and hence the list below contains his name only.

| Serial No. | Name of the Coin Issuing Authority | Reign | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | AH | CE |
| 63 | Dāūd Shāh Karrānī (s/o Sulaimān) | 980-4 | 1572-6 |

## DĀŪD SHĀH KARRĀNĪ

### (AH 980-4/CE 1572-6)

Taj Khan Karrānī, a former official of Sher Shāh Sūrī, assassinated the last ruler of Muhammad shāhī dynasty Ghiyāth al-Dīn Shāh of Bengal and founded Karrānī dynasty in Bengal. Taj Khan ruled Bengal from CE 1564 to 1566. After his death the dynasty was succeeded by his younger brother Sulaimān Khan Karrānī (CE 1566-72) followed by Sulaimān's son Bāyazīd Karrānī (CE 1572). None of them had issued coins or none of those coins have been discovered. As their rule was as a vassal state of Mughal emperor Akbar, they probably did not issue coins and paid homage to Akbar. After death of Bāyazīd Shāh, his younger brother Dāūd Shāh Karrānī (AH 980-4/CE 1572-6) was raised to throne and he thought that he is strong enough to fight against the army of Akbar of Delhi. He issued coins in his own name[1] showing that he did not pay homage to Delhi. He had several battles with the army of Akbar, while could not survive against him. Dāūd Shāh was defeated in the war of Rajmahal by Akbar's joint force of khan-i-Jahan and Muẕaffar Khan Turbati, was captured and executed in the year AH 984/CE 1576. He was the last independent sultān of Bengal having coins in his own name. After his death the tradition of independent sultāns ceased and Bengal became part of Mughal Empire as subah under subahdars.

[1] S. Goron and J.P. Goenka, op. cit., Coin ref. B980-984, pp. 262-3.

## Coin B-63-01

### Silver Rupee Standard Tanka

**Calligraphic Style:** A combination of *Thuluth, Muhaqqaq, Naskh* and *Nagari*

**Gray Scale Drawing of the Coin**

Obverse legend in the central field inside square,
*dāūd shāh sulaimān shāh karrānī khallada allāh mulkahu wa sultānahu*
In *Nagari,*
*śrī dāūd shāhī*
On the margin *abū'l muẓaffar,* etc.

Shahāda in the central field and the margin inscriptions are not legible.

**Epigraphic Analysis of the Obverse**

| No. | Epigraphic Segment | Typesetting Form | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | داود شاه | داود شاه | *dāūd shāh* |
| 2 | سليمان | سليمان | *sulaimān* |
| 3 | شاه | شاه | *shāh* |
| 4 | كرراني | كرراني | *karrānī* |
| 5 | خلد الله | خلد الله | *khallada allāh* |
| 6 | ملكه | ملكه | *mulkahu* |
| 7 | وسلطانه | وسلطانه | *wa sultānahu* |
| 8 | শ্রী | শ্রী | *śrī* |
| 9 | দাউদ | দাউদ | *dāūd* |
| 10 | শাহী | শাহী | *shāhī* |

# APPENDICES

# Appendix 1
# Coin Coding Method

This volume covers coins of almost all rulers of Sultānate period but not all types of a particular ruler. A method has been followed to assign numbers for the coins. The coding structure for coins used in this book is as follows:

B-Ruler's Serial Number-N$^{th}$ Coin of the Ruler

Here, general prefix B is used for Bengal. The second part is for ruler's serial number where a two-digit number is assigned. The last part is for the specific coin where a two-digit number is used. Taking ruler's code as XX and coins number as YY the specimen code is,

B-XX-YY

Obverse of the coins have been placed on the left hand image and the reverse on the right. This has been followed throughout the book and has not been mentioned with coins.

# Appendix 2
# Summary of Calligraphic Styles

Frequency of calligraphic styles on the used coins in the volume has been summarized in the following table. Tally outcome is presented in the table. Muhaqqaq and Naskh have been found as most commonly used calligraphic styles, while Thuluth and Kufic al-Bangalia are found as common. Rests of the calligraphic styles are less frequent on Bengal Sultānate coins.

**Frequency of Calligraphic Styles on Coins Studied**

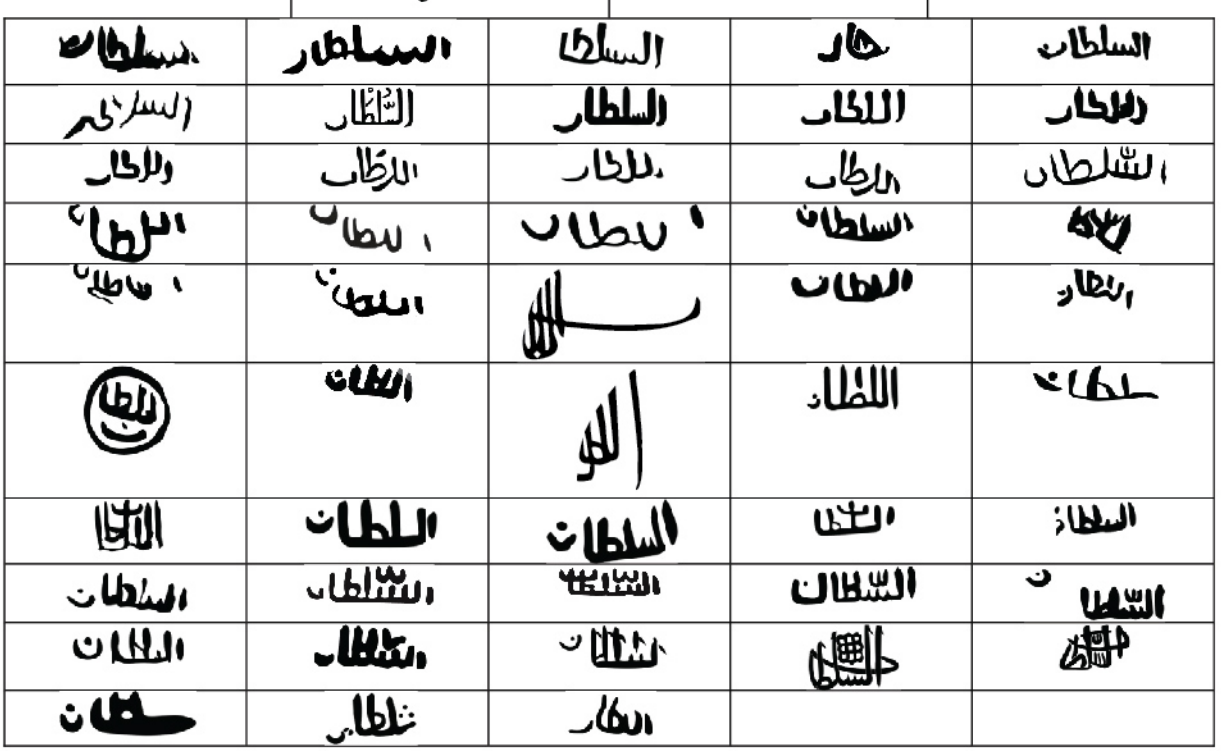
| Type of Calligraphy | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Naskh | 41 |
| Muhaqqaq | 43 |
| Thuluth | 35 |
| Kufic al-Bangalia | 22 |
| Nagari | 6 |
| Tughra al-Bangalia | 5 |
| Proto-bangla | 2 |
| Bihari | 2 |
| Masreki | 1 |
| Murabba | 1 |

# Appendix 3
# Summary of Segments

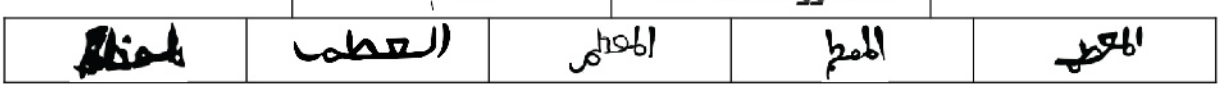
Due to calligraphic differences or due to the fact that dies of coins were handmade, same inscriptions have taken different shapes or forms on different coins. It makes deciphering of Bengal Sultānate coins a bit more challenging to readers with non-Arabic background. In the following section a few segments of legends from different coins have been summarized for comparison.

**Segments of Legends/Titles**

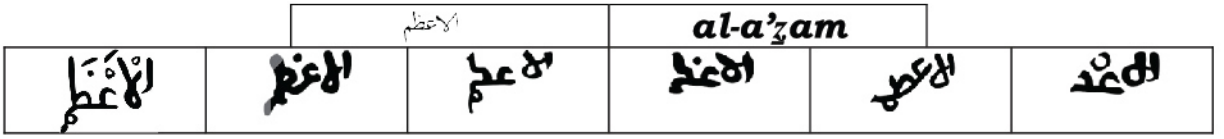
السلطان **al-sultān**



المعظم **al-mu'azzam**

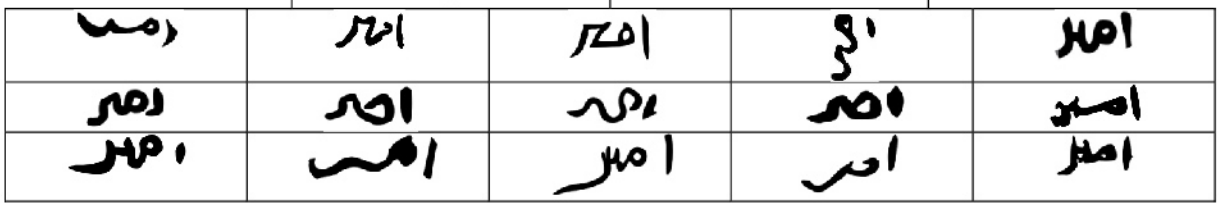


الاعظم **al-a'zam**

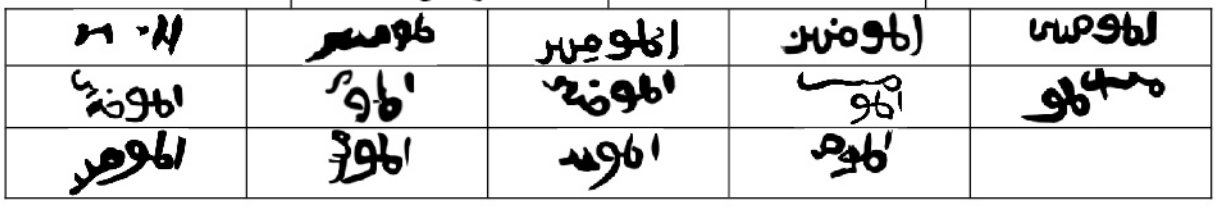


| nāsir | ناصر |
|---|---|

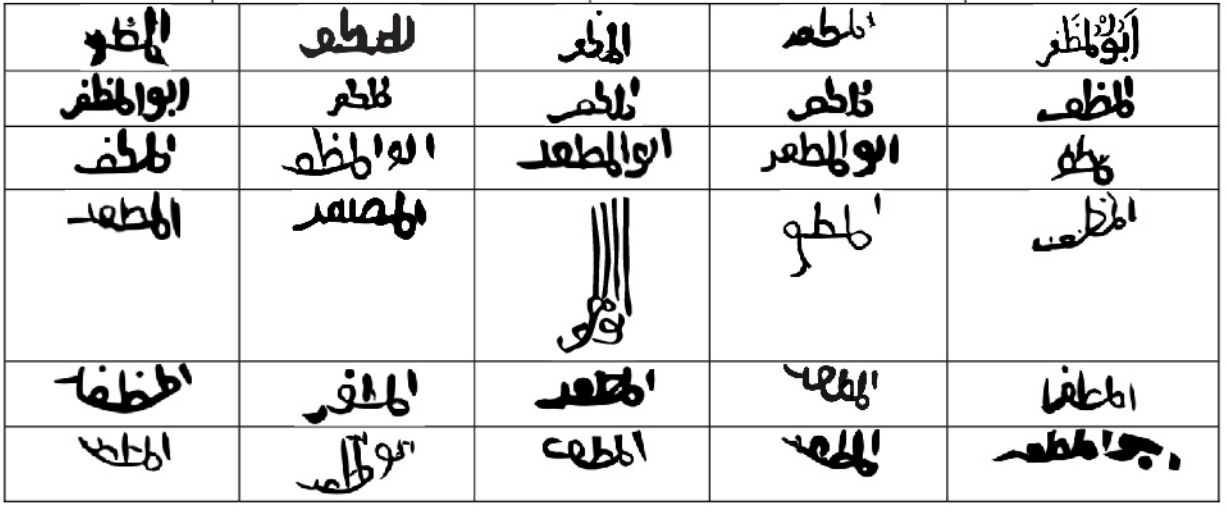
| amīr | امر |
|---|---|



| al-mū'minīn | المومنين |
|---|---|



| (abu)al-muẓaffar | (ابو) المظفر |
|---|---|

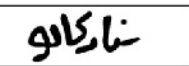


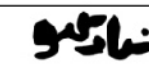
| | (ابو) المجاهد | (abu) *al-mujāhid* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

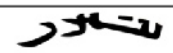
| | غياث | *Ghiyāth* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

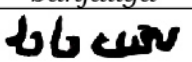
| | خلد الله(ملكه) | *khallada allāh (mulkahu)* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

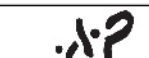
**Mint Cities**

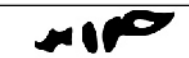


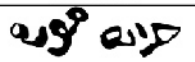




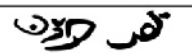


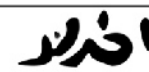


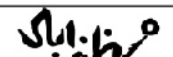


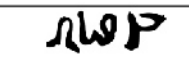


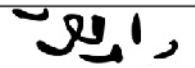
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| سنارکانو / *sunārgāon* | | ستکانو / *satgāon* | ملك ستکانو / *mulk satgāon* | |
| | | | | |
| لکنوتی / *Lakhnautī* | | | | داخل بلاپور / *dākhil balāpur* |
| | | | | |
| داخل بنجالیة / *dākhil banjaliya* | خزانه / *khazānah* | | | خزانه مونه / *khazānah mūnah* |
| | | | | |
| ترهت مردن / *tirhut mardan* | ناصراباد / *Nāsirābād* | مظفراباد / *mu ẕaffarābād* | خلیفتاباد / *Khalīfatābād* | دارنور / *dār noor* |
| | | | | |
| فتحاباد / *fathābād* | | حسین ۱ بد / *hussainābād* | دارال ضرب / *dār al-zarb* | |
| | | | | |
| ونودي *wa* / *nūdyā* | ازمردن / *azmardan* | | | |
| | | | | |
| فیروزاباد / *Fīrūzābād* | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

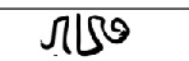


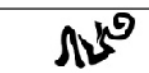


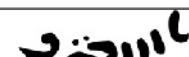


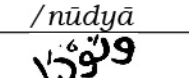


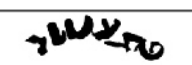


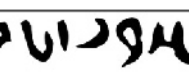


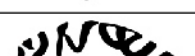












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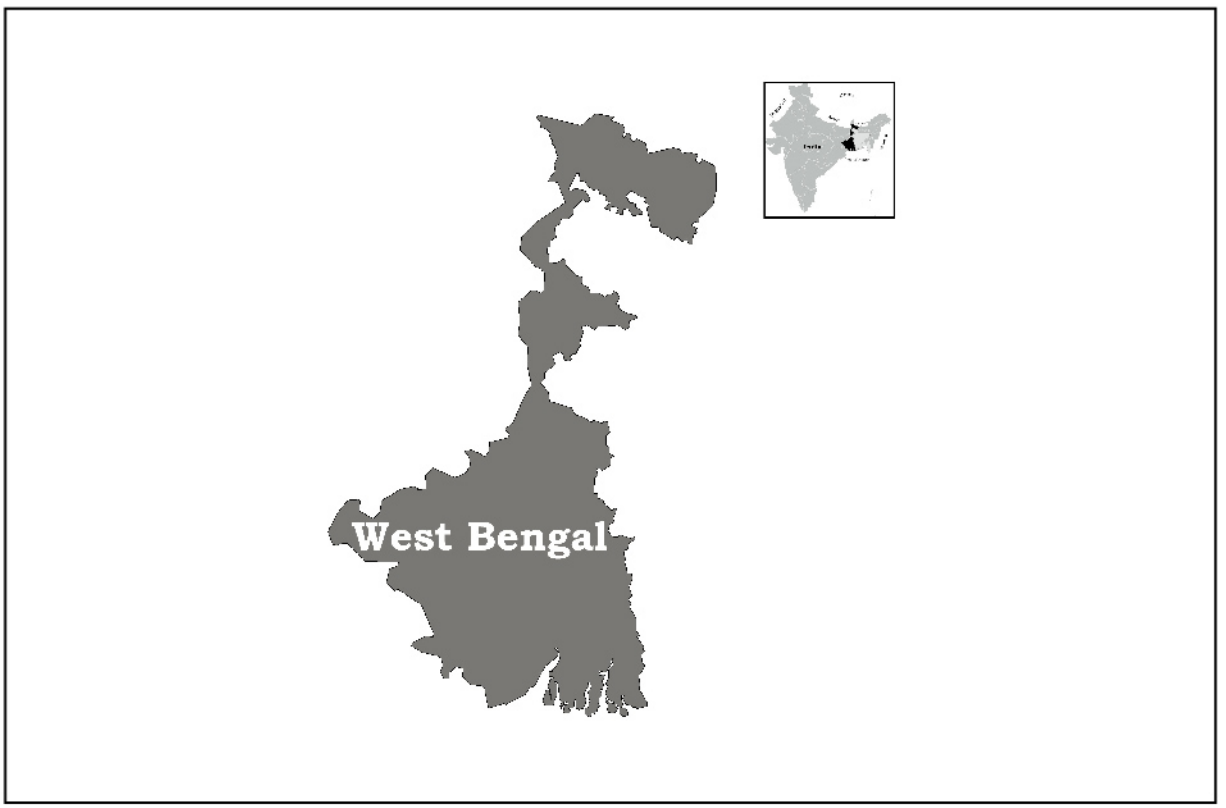
Eastern Part of the Sultānate Period Bengal is Now Independent *Bangladesh*.




Western Part of the Sultānate Period Bengal is Now *West Bengal*, a State of India.

ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلْمَوْتَ وَٱلْحَيَوٰةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْغَفُورُ ﴿٢﴾

*[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed- and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving* (Al-Qur'an, 67:2).

Please accept our efforts and forgive all our mistakes!